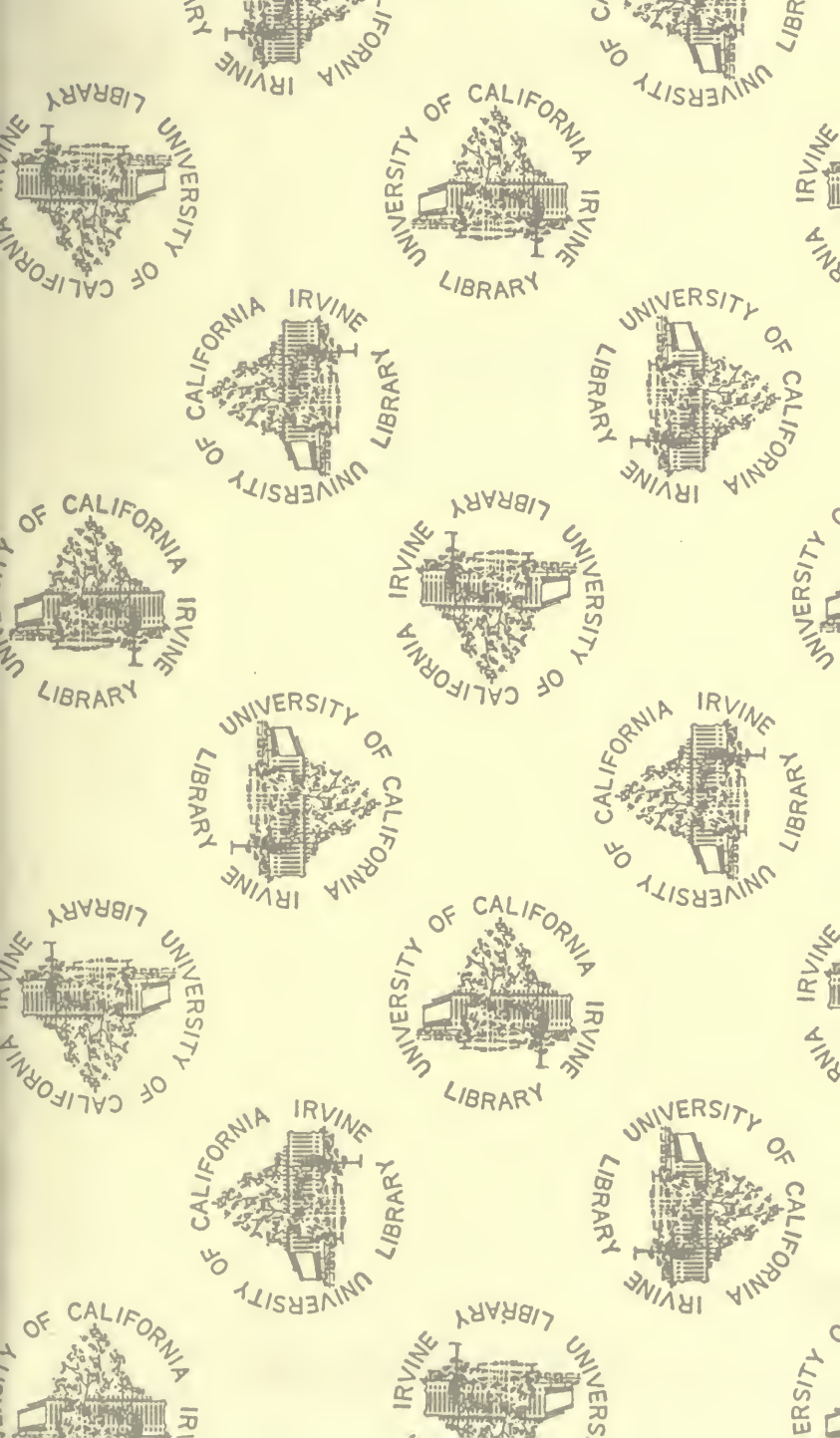


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THE WAR MAKER

**BEING THE
TRUE STORY OF CAPTAIN GEORGE B. BOYNTON**



Photo by Pirie MacDonald

THE WAR MAKER

BEING THE TRUE STORY OF
CAPTAIN GEORGE B. BOYNTON

By
HORACE SMITH

WITH PORTRAIT



CHICAGO
A. C. McCLURG & CO.
1911

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THE WAR MAKER

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A. C. McCLURG & CO.

1911

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NOTE

THE hero of this book was a real man, though he has carried to his grave the secret of his true name. It was not Boynton, although it is known that he was born in Fifth Avenue, near Fourteenth Street, New York, May 1, 1842, and that his father was a distinguished surgeon, with an estate on Lake Champlain. He rarely talked of his remarkable life, and recounted in detail to the author of this volume the facts of his career of adventure, only in the closing months of his life.

Captain Boynton was of the type of filibuster that is read of so often, but rarely met with in life. He was a tall, bronzed, athletic, broad-shouldered man, one of the most picturesque and daring of the many soldiers of fortune who have sought adventures over the world. From Hongkong to Valparaiso fighters of all races knew the name of Boynton. From Cape Horn to New York he did not permit himself to be forgotten. Whether exploring the sources of the Orinoco, or hunting elusive supporters for a deserted American President, or battling in the Haytian army,

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or spying out court secrets in Venezuela, or running a distillery in Brooklyn with Jim Fisk as partner, he was invariably master of himself and continually a personality to be reckoned with. Captain Boynton was the original of the "Soldier of Fortune" in Richard Harding Davis's story of that name, and gave to Guy Boothby the facts of his novel "The Beautiful White Devil," with which dashing heroine Captain Boynton was on terms of intimacy. In the account of his life given in this volume fictitious names have in two or three instances been used for persons still living who figured in business deals with him. Otherwise the story is told almost identically as Captain Boynton narrated it to the author.

After escaping death in scores of forms, including a Chinese pirate's cutlass, an assassin's dagger, the fire of a file of soldiers at sunrise, and war's guns, this utterly fearless, cheerfully arrogant retired blockade runner, revolutionist, and hunter of pirates died peacefully in his bed, at a ripe age, on January 19, 1911, in New York City, where he had led a quiet life since 1905, when he voluntarily left Venezuela, after withstanding repeated efforts by President Castro to drive him from the country.

New York,

H. S.

Jan. 25, 1911.

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A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE'S CREED

THROUGHOUT my life I have sought adventure over the face of the world and its waters as other men have hunted and fought for gold or struggled for fame. The love of it, whether through the outcropping of a strain of buccaneer blood that had been held in subjection by generations of placid propriety or as a result of some freak of prenatal suggestion, was born in me, deep-planted and long-rooted. Excitement is as essential to my existence as air and food. Through it my life has been prolonged in activity and my soul perpetuated in youth; when I can no longer enjoy its electrification, Death, as it is so spoken of, will, I hope, come quickly.

To get away from the flat, tiresome, beaten path and find conditions or create situations to gratify the clamorous demand within me has ever been my compelling passion. I have served, all told, under eighteen flags and to each I gave the best that was in me, even though some of them were disappointing in their failure to produce a pleasing amount of excitement. In following my natural bent, which I was powerless, as well as disinclined, to interfere with or alter, to the full length of my capabilities, it perhaps

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will be considered by some people that I have gone outside of written laws. To such a contention my answer is that I have always been true to my own conscience, which is the known and yet the unknown quantity we all must reckon with, and to my country. In the transportation of arms with which to further fights for freedom or fortune I have flown many flags I had no strictly legal right to fly, over ships that were not what they pretended to be nor what their papers indicated them to be, but never have I taken refuge behind the Stars and Stripes, nor have I ever called on an American minister or consular officer to get me out of the successive scrapes with governments, but most often with misgovernments, into which my warring wanderings have carried me. Red-blooded love of adventure, free from any wanton spirit and with the prospect of financial reward always subordinated, has been the driving force in all of my encounters with good men and bad, with the latter class much in the majority. Therefore I have only scorn for sympathy and contempt for criticism, nor am I troubled with uncanny visions by night nor haunting recollections by day.

There is just one point in my philosophy which I wish to make clear before the Blue Peter is hoisted, and that is that most of the so-called impossibilities

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we encounter are simply disguised opportunities. Because they are regarded as impossible they are not guarded against and are therefore comparatively easy of accomplishment when they really are possible, as most of them are. Acceptance of this theory, with which every student of the history of warfare will agree, will help to explain my ability to do some of the things which will be told of, that the thoughtless would promptly put down as impossible.

The name by which I am known is one of the contradictions of my life. Save only for my father, who sympathized with my adventurous disposition at the same time that he tried to curb it, I was at war with my family almost from the time I could talk. I am a Republican in politics from the fact that they were active supporters of James Buchanan, and I became a Southern sympathizer simply because they were bitterly opposed to slavery. When I left home to become an adventurer around the globe I buried my real name and I do not propose to uncover it, here or hereafter. I am proud, though, of the fact that my family is descended from a King of Burgundy; for since reaching years of discretion, though I have been as loyal to the United States as any man since 1865, I never have believed in a republican form of government. In the course of my activities I have

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used many names in many lands, but that of Boynton, which had been in the family for years, stuck to me until I finally adopted it, prefixing a "George" and a "B.," which really stands for "Boynton." I made it my business to forget, as soon as they had served my purpose, the different names I took in response to the demand of expediency, but I remember that Kinnear and Henderson were two under which I created some comment on opposite sides of the world.

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CHAPTER I

UNDER FIRE THE FIRST TIME

I WAS born on May 1, 1842, on Fifth Avenue, New York, not a long way north of Washington Square. My father was a distinguished surgeon and owned a large estate on Lake Champlain, where most of my youthful summers were spent. I had three brothers and two sisters; but not for many years have I known where they are, or whether alive or dead. After having had a private tutor at home I was educated by jumps at the Hinesburgh, Vermont, Academy; at the old Troy Conference Academy at Poultney, Vermont, and at the Burlington, Vermont, Academy, where, young as I was, I became deeply interested in the study of medicine, for which I had inherited a pronounced liking; that was the one point on which I seemed to fit in with the family. I did not stay a great while at any institution because of my success in leading the other students into all sorts of dare-devil pranks, to the detriment of discipline and

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the despair of the dominies. As an evidence of the inclining twig I remember, with still some feeling of pride, that during one of my last summers on Lake Champlain I organized fifteen boys of the neighborhood into an expedition against the Indians of the far West. We were equipped with blankets stolen from our beds, three flasks of powder, and nearly one hundred pounds of lead, which was to be moulded into bullets for the extermination of the redskins of the world. As Commander-in-Chief I carried the only pistol in the party but we expected to seize additional arms on the way to the battlefields. I had scouts ahead of us and on both flanks and by avoiding the roads and the bank of the lake we managed to evade capture until the third day, although the whole countryside was searching for us, in rather hysterical fashion.

After a somewhat scattered series of escapades, which increased the ire of the family and intensified my dislike of their prosaic protestations, my father solemnly declared his intention of sending me to the United States Naval Academy. It was his idea, as he expressed it, that the discipline which prevailed there would be sufficient to restrain me and at the same time my active imagination would find a vent in my inborn love of the sea. I was delighted with this

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promised realization of my boyhood dream, for it seemed to me that the career of a naval officer presented greater possibilities of adventure than any other. Former Congressman George P. Marsh, of Burlington, Vermont, an old friend of the family, who afterward was sent to Italy as American Minister and died there, arranged to secure my appointment to Annapolis, and I entered a preparatory school to brush up on the studies required by the entrance examination. The machinery to procure my appointment had been set in motion and I was ready to take the examination when the opening gun of the Civil War was fired at Fort Sumter, on April 12, 1861.

I was immediately seized with a wild desire to be in the fight, but my father would not consent to it, on account of my age. He would not hear to my going into the army as a private but promised that if I would wait a year, and was still of the same mind, he would try to get me a commission. As I have said, my sympathies were with the South but it was more convenient for me to take the other side, and at that moment I was not particular about principles. The family were duly horrified one evening when I went home, after some things I needed, and told them I had enlisted. The next day my father bought my discharge and hustled me out to the little town of Wood-

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stock, Illinois, where I was placed in charge of an uncle who was abjured to keep me from going to war, without regard to anything else that might happen. He prevented me from joining an infantry regiment which was then forming but I got away with a cavalry regiment which was raised in that section some months later, and was made one of its officers. We went to Cairo, Illinois, and from there by transport to Pittsburg Landing, where we arrived just in time to take part in the battle which was fought on April 6 and 7, 1862. My regiment was pitted against the famous Black Horse Cavalry of Mississippi and we came together at the gallop. I was riding a demon of a black horse and, with the bit in his teeth, he charged into the line two or three lengths ahead of the rest. A Confederate officer came at me with his sabre raised. I ducked my head behind my horse's neck and shot him between the eyes, but just as my pistol cracked his sword cut through my horse's head to the brain and the point of it laid open my right cheek, from the ear almost to the chin. The horse fell on my leg and held me there, unconscious. In the evening I was picked up and sent to the general hospital, where I stayed for three weeks.

When I was discharged from the hospital I was too weak for active service so I was sent into the

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Tennessee mountains in charge of a detachment to intercept contraband which was being sent into the South from Cincinnati. We had been there about ten days when, early in the morning, one of the patrols brought in a fine-looking young man, who had been arrested as a spy. There was a refinement about the prisoner that aroused my suspicions, and during the day I satisfied myself that "he" was a woman. While she would not acknowledge her identity, I had reason to believe, and always have been sure in my own mind, that she was none other than Belle Boyd, the famous Confederate spy. I was born with a fondness for women, which then was strong within me, and besides, my heart was with her cause. Therefore it is without apology that I say I arranged things so that she escaped the next night through a window in the shed in which she was confined.

Soon after my return to headquarters I contracted a bad case of malaria and was sent home, which meant back to Woodstock, where I had eloped with a banker's daughter just before going to the front. I was disgusted with the war and I expressed myself so freely, and was so outspoken in my sympathy for the South, that I made myself extremely unpopular in a very short time. It probably is true, too, as was charged against me, that I swaggered around a lot

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and presumed on the reputation I had made. At any rate the people set their hearts on hanging me for being a "damned copperhead," and they might have done it if old man Wellburn, the proprietor of the hotel at which my wife and I were staying, had not helped me to stand off a mob that came after me. I met them at the door with a revolver in each hand and Wellburn was right behind me with quite an arsenal. They suggested that I come out and renounce my principles and make certain promises, or be hanged at the liberty pole. I told them I would renounce nothing and promise less.

"If I am a copperhead," I told them, "I am a fighting copperhead, while you are neither kind. If you want a fight why don't you go to the front and get it, instead of staying home and making trouble for a better man, who has fought and bled for the cause you are shouting about? If you prefer a fight here, come on and get it. I've got twelve shots here and there will be just thirteen of us in hell or heaven if you try to make good your threat."

Old Wellburn was known as a fighter and the sight of his weapons added weight to my words, so the crowd concluded to let me have my way about it, and dispersed. That experience intensified my dissatisfaction with the whole business and I sent in

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my resignation. It was accepted, and when I had thought it all over I considered that I was lucky to have escaped a court-martial. It was fortunate for me that Governor "Dick" Yates and my father were warm friends. The Governor was thoroughly disgusted with the way I had conducted myself, but he stood by me.

I then moved to Chicago, with my wife. She had a small fortune and I had come into considerable money on my twentieth birthday, so we were in easy circumstances. I bought a vinegar works on Kinzie Street; but the dull routine of business was repulsive to me and I sold it in less than a year, after having operated it at a handsome profit, and went on to New York. We stopped at the old St. Nicholas, at Broadway and Spring Street, which was the fashionable hotel in those days.

I was looking for anything that promised excitement. I had heard that Carlos Manuel de Cespedes was fomenting a revolt in Cuba,—afterward known as the "Ten Years' War,"—and had conceived the idea of taking a hand in it. To my disappointment, I found that no Junta had been established in this country, nor, so far as I could discover, were there any responsible men in New York who were connected with the revolution. While I was wondering how I could get

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into communication with Cespedes my interest was aroused by a newspaper story of the new blockade runner "Letter B," which had made one round trip from Bermuda to Beaufort, North Carolina, and was being looked for again by the Federal fleet. The "Letter B" — its name a play on words — was a long, low, powerful, schooner-rigged steamship, built by Laird on the Mersey. Though classed as a fifteen-knot ship she could do sixteen or seventeen, fast going at that time. The story which attracted my attention told all about her and said there was so much money in blockade running that the owners could well afford to lose her after she had made three successful trips.

In five minutes I decided to become a blockade runner and to buy the new and already famous ship, if she was to be had at any price within reason. I bought a letter of credit and took the next ship for Bermuda. On my arrival there I found that the "Letter B" had been expected in for several days from her second trip and that there was considerable anxiety about her. I also learned that her owner was building a second ship on the same lines and for the same trade. A fresh cargo of munitions of war was awaiting the "Letter B," and a ship was ready to take to England the cotton she would bring. I got acquainted with the agent for the blockade runner and, after

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making sure that he had an ample power of attorney from her owner, offered to buy her and take the chance that she might never come in. He was not disposed to sell, at first, and wanted me to wait until the arrival of her owner, Joseph Berry, who was daily expected from England.

After waiting and talking with the agent for several days I said to him one morning: "It looks as though your ship has been captured or sunk. I'll take a gambler's chance that she has n't and will give you fifty thousand dollars for her and twenty-five thousand dollars for the cargo that is waiting for her; you to take the cargo she brings in. I'll give you three hours to think it over."

I figured that the waiting cargo of arms was worth a couple of thousand dollars more than my offer but it looked as though I was taking a long chance with my offer for the ship. However, I had a "hunch," or whatever you want to call it, that she was all right, and I never have had a well defined "hunch" steer me in anything but a safe course, wherefore I invariably heed them. At the expiration of the time limit there was not a sign of smoke in any direction and the agent accepted my proposition. In half an hour I had a bill of sale for the ship and the warehouse receipts for the cargo of war supplies. At sunset

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that day a ship came in from England with the former owner. He criticised his agent sharply at first, but found some consolation in the fact that the vessel he was building would soon go into commission. When two more days passed with no sign of the anxiously looked for ship Mr. Berry concluded that he had all the best of the bargain and complimented his agent on his shrewdness.

On the third day the "Letter B" came tearing in, pursued at long range by the U. S. S. "Powhatan," which proceeded to stand guard over the harbor, keeping well offshore on account of the reefs and shoals that were under her lee. The "Letter B" discharged a full cargo of cotton and was turned over to me. While her cargo of arms was going in I went over her carefully and found her in excellent condition and ready to go right back. She was unloaded in twelve hours and all of her cargo was safely stowed in another forty-eight hours. I took command of her, with John B. Williams, her old captain, as sailing master, and determined to put to sea at once. I knew the "Powhatan" would not be looking for us so soon and planned to catch her off her guard.

There was then no man-of-war entrance to the harbor and it was necessary to enter and leave by daylight. With the sun just high enough to let us get

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clear of the reefs before dark, and with the "Powhatan" well offshore and at the farthest end of the course she was lazily patrolling, we put to sea. The "Powhatan" saw us sooner than I had expected she would and started to head us off, but she was not quick enough. The moment she swung around I increased our speed to a point which the pilot loudly swore would pile us up on the rocks, but it did n't, and when we cleared the passage we were all of four miles in the lead. As I had figured, the "Powhatan" did not suppose we would come out for at least a week and was cruising slowly about with fires banked, so it took her some time to get up a full head of steam. She fired three or four shots at us but they fell far short. As soon as it was dark, with all of our lights doused, we turned and headed a little south of west so as to come up to Charleston, South Carolina, which was my objective point, from the south. At sunrise we had the ocean to ourselves.

I started in at once to master practical navigation, the theory of which I knew, and to familiarize myself with the handling of a ship. I stood at the wheel for hours at a time and almost wore out the instruments taking reckonings by the sun and the stars. Navigation came to me naturally, for I loved it, and in three

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days I would have been willing to undertake a cruise around the world with a Chinese crew.

We arrived off Charleston late in the afternoon and steamed up close inshore until we could make out the smoke of the blockading fleet, standing well out, in a semicircle. Then we dropped back a bit and anchored. All of the conditions shaped themselves to favor us. It was a murky night with a hard blow, which came up late in the afternoon, and when we got under way at midnight a good bit of a sea was running. With the engines held down to about half speed, but ready to do their best in a twinkling, we headed for the harbor, standing as close inshore as we dared go. We passed so close to the blockading ship stationed at the lower end of the crescent that she could not have depressed her guns enough to hit us even if we had been discovered in time, but she did not see us until we had passed her. Then she let go at us with her bow guns and while they did no damage, we were at such close quarters that their flash gave the other ships a glimpse of us as we darted away at full speed. They immediately opened on us but, after the first minute or two, it was a case of haphazard shooting with all of them. They knew how they bore from the channel and, making a guess at the proper allowance for our

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speed, they blazed away, hoping for the best but fearing the worst. The first shells exploded close around us and some of the fragments came aboard but no one was injured. When I saw where they were firing I threw my ship farther over toward Sullivan's Island, where she could go on account of her light draft, and sailed quietly along into the harbor at reduced speed. At daylight we went up to the dock and were warmly welcomed.

Before the second night was half over we had everything out of her and a full cargo of cotton aboard and we steamed out at once. I knew the blockaders would not expect us for at least four days and we surprised them just as we had surprised the "Powhatan" at Bermuda. It was a thick night and we sailed right through the fleet, at half speed so as better to avoid detection, but prepared to break and run for it at the crack of a gun, without a shot being fired or an extra light shown. As soon as we were clear of the line we put on full speed and three days later we were safe at Turk's Island, the most southerly and easterly of the Bahama Islands, off the coast of Florida, which I had selected as a base of operations. Though these islands ought long ago to have come under the Stars and Stripes, as they eventually must, they are still owned by England, and in those days

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they were a haven and a clearing house for the outsiders who were actively aiding the Confederacy—for a very substantial consideration. Most of the blockade runners, including the “Banshee,” “Siren,” “Robert E. Lee,” “Lady Stirling” and other famous ships, were operating out of Nassau, which had the advantage of closer proximity to the chief Southern ports, being within six hundred miles of Charleston and Wilmington. Turk’s Island was nine hundred miles away, but I never have believed in following the crowd. It is my rule to do things alone and in my own way, as must be the practice of every man who expects to succeed in any dangerous business. It is no part of my philosophy to become a party to a situation in which I may suffer from the mistakes of others or in which others are likely to get into trouble through any fault of mine. The popularity of Nassau caused it to be closely watched by the Federal cruisers that patrolled the Gulf Stream, while the less important islands to the south and east were practically unguarded.

Though precarious for the men who made them so, those were plenteous days for the Bahamas, compared with which the rich tourist toll since levied on the then hated Yankees is but small change. The fortunes yielded by blockade running seemed made by

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magic, so quick was the process. Cotton that was bought in Charleston or Wilmington for ten cents a pound sold for ten times as much in the Bahamas and there were enormous profits in the return cargoes of military supplies. The captains and crews shared in the proceeds and the health of the Confederacy was drunk continuously, and often riotously. By the time I projected myself temporarily into this golden atmosphere of abnormal activity, running the blockade had become more of a business and less of a romance than it was in the reckless early days of the war. The fleet was made up of fast ships of light draft, especially built to meet the needs and dangers of the trade, and they were so much faster than the warships which hunted them that the percentage captured was relatively very small.

Before leaving Bermuda I had ordered a cargo of munitions of war sent to Turk's Island. We had to wait nearly a month for this shipment to arrive but the time was well spent in overhauling the engines and putting the "Letter B" in perfect condition.

My second trip to Charleston furnished a degree of excitement that exalted my soul. While we were held up at Turk's Island the blockading fleet had been strengthened and supplemented by several small and fast boats which cruised around outside of the

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line. Without knowing this I had decided — it must have been in response to a “hunch” — to make a dash straight through the line and into the harbor. It was fortunate that we followed this plan for they were expecting us to come up from the south, hugging the shore as we had done before, and if we had taken that course they certainly would have sunk us or forced us aground. We were proceeding cautiously but did not think we were close to the danger zone when suddenly one of the patrol ships picked us up and opened fire. Her guns were no better than peashooters but they gave the signal to the fleet and instantly lights popped up all along the line ahead of us. When caught in such a trap, if I had not been thirsting for thrills, I would have shown them our heels, for we could have gotten away without any trouble; but the demon of dare-deviltry seized and gripped me.

In the flashing lights ahead I saw all of the excitement I had been longing for, and with an exultant yell to the helmsman to “tell the engineer to give her hell,” I pushed him aside and seized the wheel. I fondled the spokes lovingly and leaned over them in a tumult of joy. It was the great moment of which I had dreamed from boyhood. I had anticipated that when it came I would be considerably

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excited and forgetful of all my carefully thought out plans for meeting an emergency, but to my surprise I found that I was as cool as though we were riding at anchor in New York Bay. In the first flash I felt myself grow cold all over and then a gentle current of electricity began running through me, as though my heart had been transformed into a dynamo and my veins into fine wires. The opening gun cleared my mind of all its anxieties and intensified its action. I remember that I took time to analyze my feelings to make sure that I was calm and collected and not stunned and stolid, and that I was silent from choice and not through anything of fear. I counted the blockading ships as their hidden lights flashed out and wondered how their officers and crews enjoyed being dragged out of their first sound sleep by my impertinent little vessel. I measured the distance we would have to go to clear their line and tried to figure out, from a rough calculation as to the number of their guns and the accuracy of their fire, the mathematical probability of our being sunk. Strange though it may seem, the possibility of our capture never occurred to me. We might be sent to the bottom, and would be if it were so decreed by Fate, but otherwise we would get away, and the only other question was as to the nature and extent of our

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injuries. When we were fairly under their spiteful guns I thought of what great sport it would be if we could only return their fire on something like even terms. I compared the wide, individualistic opportunity of naval warfare with routine battles on land, which are fought by rules laid down for every condition that can arise, and unhesitatingly decided in favor of the sea, with its long-nursed passion for the man who dares its fury, and its despotism over him who fears it.

As though spurred by a human impulse the good little ship sprang forward as she felt the full force of her engines, and never did she make such another race of it as she did that night. In the sea then running and at the speed we were going we would ordinarily have had two men at the wheel, but I found it so easy and so delightful to handle the ship alone that I declined the assistance of Captain Williams, who stood just behind me. Though I am not tall, being not much over five feet and eight inches, nature was kind in giving me a well set up frame and a powerful constitution, devoid of nerves but with muscles of steel,—in those days and for many years after,—and with a reserve supply of strength that made me marvel at its source. Through all of my active life I kept myself in as perfect condition as a trained

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athlete, despite occasional dissipations ashore, and I never got into a close corner without feeling myself possessed of the strength of half a dozen ordinary men. Consequently the tugs of the wheel as we tore through the water toward Charleston seemed like a child's pulls on a string.

The widest opening in the already closing line was, luckily, directly in front of us, and I headed for it. The sparks that were streaming from our smoke-stack and the lights of the patrol which was trying to follow us, gave the blockaders our course as plainly as though it had been noonday, and they closed in from both sides to head us off. Evidently they considered that time was also fleeting for they lost not a moment in getting their guns to going, and shot and shell screamed and sang all around the undaunted "Letter B." First the mainmast and then the foremast came down with a crash, littering the decks with their gear. A shell carried death into the forecastle. One shot tore away the two forward stanchions of the pilot house and another one smashed through the roof but neither Captain Williams nor I was injured by so much as a splinter. All of our boats and most of our upper works were literally shot to pieces. That we were not sent to the bottom on the run was no tribute to the skill of the Yankee gunners. They

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could not have been more than half awake when they began firing on us and we were flying so fast that it appeared to disconcert them, even after they got their bearings. If they had taken time to depress their guns the race would have been a short one, but they all wanted to sink us at once, with the result that only one shot struck us below the main deck, and that did very little damage to the ship.

From first to last we must have been under that terrific fire for half an hour but it seemed not more than a few minutes, and it really was with something of regret that I found the shots were falling astern, for I had enjoyed the experience immensely. When we got up to the dock we found that five of our men had been killed and a dozen more or less seriously injured. The ship had not been damaged at all so far as speed and seaworthiness in ordinary weather were concerned, though she looked a wreck. The blockaders thought we were much more seriously injured than was actually the case but their mistake was one that could easily be pardoned. They expected we would be laid up for a month. Consequently when we steamed out on the fourth night, after making only temporary repairs, they were not looking for us and we got through their line without much trouble. A few shots were fired at us when we

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were almost clear but not one of them came aboard and we were not pursued; they had come to have great respect for our speed. We refitted at Turk's Island, where we laid up for three weeks.

I made two more trips to Charleston without any very exciting experiences, though we were fired on both times, and then sold the ship to an enterprising Englishman who was waiting for me at Turk's Island. I had made a comfortable fortune with her and sold her for more than I paid for her. She was in almost as good condition as when I bought her, but I have made it a rule never to overplay my luck, and I knew I had run about as many trips with her as I could expect to make without a change of fortune. I am under the impression that the ship and her new owner were captured on her next trip to Charleston, but am not sure as to that.

CHAPTER II

FILIBUSTERING FOR THE CUBANS

HAVING succeeded as a blockade runner I was ambitious to become a filibuster, which kindred vocation I thought offered even greater opportunities for adventure. Immediately after the sale of the "Letter B," in the latter part of 1864, I returned to New York, in the hope that the Cespedes revolution in Cuba would have been sprung and a Junta established with which I could work. I found that the revolt was still hatching and that no New York agent had been appointed, so, for want of something better to do, I bought from Benjamin Wood, editor of the *New York News*, the old Franklin Avenue distillery in Brooklyn. This venture resulted in an open and final rupture with my family, who were virtuously outraged to begin with because of the aid I had given the South as a blockade runner. I left home in a rage and swore that I would never again set foot in it or set eyes on any member of the family, and except for a visit to my father just before he died, not long afterward, I have kept my vow. I was always his favorite son, in spite of my wild love of adventure

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and the ways into which it led me, and when I got word that he was seriously ill I went to him at once, but I saw no one else in the house except the servants.

The Franklin Avenue distillery was then the largest in the East but it had not been in operation for several years. I put Charles McLaughlin in charge of the plant and set it in motion. Two or three other distilleries were then running in Williamsburg, one of which was owned by Oscar King. I had been in the distillery business only a few months, during which time the property had shown a large profit, when, while attending a performance at the old Grand Opera House with Andrew W. Gill, I met "Jim" Fisk, with whom I had become acquainted in my boyhood days. At the time I had known him he was running a gaudy pedler's wagon out of Boston. He was laid up for a week by a prank which I played on him in George Steele's store at Ferrisburg, Vermont, but after that we became good friends.

Fisk, big and loudly dressed and displaying the airs which later helped to earn for him the sobriquet of "Jim Jubilee Junior," entered the theatre in company with Jay Gould, his new friend and future partner in the looting of the Erie and the great Gold Conspiracy, to say nothing of many minor maraud-

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ings into misappropriated millions. In the dramatic surroundings, Gould, half-dwarfed but plainly making up in nerve and shrewdness what he lacked in stature, with his black beard and darting eyes and his careless attire, put me in mind of a pirate, wherein my artistic judgment played me no trick, and, to complete the picture, Fisk suggested himself as the little man's business agent. Fisk swept his eyes around the theatre with something of a look of challenge, as though he wondered if there were any persons there who knew him, and, if so, how much they knew about him. His roving gaze fell on me and he nodded and smiled. A moment later he excused himself and came over to talk to me, while Gould followed him with his snapping eyes and drove them through me with a searching inquiry which seemed to satisfy him that I was simply an old acquaintance and harbored no predatory plot. Their intimacy was then in its infancy and Gould appeared to be half suspicious of every man with whom Fisk talked.

No doubt it was fate that drew Fisk and me together. He intimated, in his grandiloquent way, that he was in a huckleberry patch where nothing but money grew on the bushes, and asked what I was doing that I looked so prosperous and well satisfied with myself. I told him briefly and he asked me to

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call on him the next day. I did not go to see him but the following day he called on me at the St. Nicholas Hotel. After we had exchanged confidences regarding our careers he said he wanted to buy a half interest in the distillery and asked me to put a price on it. I told him I did not want a partner. He insisted and said he had influence at Washington, which he afterward proved, and that it would be valuable to us.

"We will make a good team," he said. "Here," and he scribbled off a check for one hundred thousand dollars and tossed it over to me, "now we are partners."

"Not much," I said, as I tossed it back to him. "I am making too much money for you to get in at that price, even if I wanted you as a partner."

"All right, then," he replied, as he wrote out another check for one hundred and fifty thousand dollars and handed it to me, "take that. I am in half with you now."

Before I could enter another objection he stalked out of the room and I let it go at that, for I had a scheme in mind and figured that his influence, if it was as powerful as he claimed, would be useful.

The constant and heavy increase in the tax on spirits had forced all of the distillers except King and

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me to shut down, and when it finally reached a point where high wines which it cost two dollars and forty cents a gallon to produce, by the ordinary methods and with the payment of the full tax, were selling for one dollar and ninety cents a gallon, King was compelled to go out of business. In the meantime I had devised a scheme for reducing the proof before the tax was paid and then, by a chemical process which operated mechanically, restoring the proof until the product was almost, if not quite, equal to Cologne spirits. My contention was that my process improved the quality of the spirits, which it assuredly did, but the effect of it was that I and not the Government received the full benefit of the change. By Fisk's advice I engaged Robert Corwin, of Dayton, Ohio, a cousin of the great "Tom" Corwin, and an intimate friend of high officials in the Treasury Department, whose names it is not necessary to mention at this late date, to secure a patent on my process. While the application was pending I was given permission to use my process, the result being that I could operate at a good profit, while the other distillers could not run except at a heavy loss. We were, as a matter of fact, cheating the Government, and I have since thought that it probably was Fisk's influence rather than any merit in my invention that

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made it smooth sailing for us, but I did not then look at it in that light. I considered that I was a very clever young man and that I was rightfully entitled to profit by my shrewdness, without any regard to the rights of the Government, or to what rival concerns might think about it.

King and the other distillers, convinced that there was something wrong somewhere, tried repeatedly but in vain to discover our method of operation. Then they complained to Washington and one revenue officer after another came over to investigate us. During the progress of these protests, which in the course of a year or more increased in number and vigor, the revolt in Cuba had broken out and the old sea lust, with its passion for excitement, came over me. I wanted Fisk to buy my interest in the distillery but he suggested that we quit business and we did so, with a profit of about three hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Fisk and I continued in partnership and in the Summer of 1866 we bought the fast and stanch little steamer "Edgar Stuart," which had been a blockade runner. We bought a cargo of arms and ammunition, consisting of old Sharps rifles and six mountain guns, and were just putting it on board when the first Cuban Junta came to New York and opened

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offices on New Street. They sent for me and wanted to buy our cargo and pay for it in bonds of the Cuban Republic, at a big discount. I refused, as we insisted on gold or its equivalent, which has always been my rule in dealing in contraband. They finally arranged that we should be paid part in cash, on the delivery of the arms, and the balance in fine Havana cigars. The Spaniards were not as watchful then as they found it necessary to be later on and the arms were delivered without much trouble at Cape Maisi, at the extreme eastern end of Cuba. On our return the cigars we had received in part payment, in waterproof cases and attached to floats, were thrown overboard in the lower bay, to be picked up by waiting small boats and sold to a tobacco merchant who had a store in the old Stevens House.

By the time we got back the Junta had raised funds from some source and engaged us to deliver several cargoes of arms to the rebels. I was always in command of these expeditions, with a sailing master in charge of the ship, while, in keeping with our agreement, Fisk stayed at home and attended to the Washington end of the business. When we sailed without clearance papers, as we sometimes were compelled to do to avoid detention and arrest, for we were constantly under suspicion, Fisk exerted his influence

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with such good effect that we never were prosecuted. We made three or four trips to Cape Maysi, and on one occasion took one hundred women and children from there to Cape San Antonio, at the western end of the island, where the rebels were better able to protect them.

In furtherance of their efforts to establish a government and make such a formidable showing as would secure their recognition, especially by the United States, as belligerents, thus making it legal to sell them munitions of war, the revolutionists attempted to build up a navy. Through the Junta they bought the fore and aft schooner "Pioneer," which was fitted out as a warship and placed in command of Francis Lay Norton, who was given the rank of Admiral of the Cuban Navy. He sailed up through Long Island Sound and out past Montauk Point, where he hoisted the Cuban flag, saluted it, and gravely declared the "Pioneer" in commission. He neglected to wait until he was well out on the high seas before going through with this formality and a revenue cutter which had followed him seized his ship and brought it dismally back to port as a filibuster. I did not then know Norton but we afterward became partners and fought side by side through adventures and exploits more thrilling than

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any that have ever been told about in fiction, so far as I have read. Without knowing him I had great respect for his nerve but not much for his discretion, as displayed in the "Pioneer" incident, and the intimate association of later years did not change my opinion of him except to increase my admiration for his superb daring.

One night I received a hurry call from the Junta. The "Stuart" was then partly loaded with a fresh supply of arms and was waiting for the rest of the shipment, coming from Bridgeport, Connecticut. The Cubans had been tipped off from Washington that she was to be seized the next day on suspicion of filibustering, which could have been proved easily, and they asked me to take her out that night and call at Baltimore for the rest of the cargo, which would be shipped there direct from Bridgeport. Greatly pleased by this evidence of increased Spanish activity against us and the prospect of some exciting times, I went to the ship without returning to my hotel and we got under way soon after midnight, though with a short crew. At daylight I hove to and repainted and rechristened the ship and presented her with a new set of papers, making it appear that she belonged to William Shannon of Barbadoes and was taking on supplies, including some arms of

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course, for West Indian planters. We loafed along and the balance of the cargo, which had been sent to Baltimore by express, was waiting for us when we got there. We hustled it on board and were just preparing to sail when the ship was seized by the United States Marshal, under orders from Washington.

"Why, Captain, your new coat of paint isn't dry yet," said the marshal. "That ship was the 'Edgar Stuart' when you left New York, all right enough." I protested that I was sailing under the British flag but he only smiled and, naturally, I did not appeal to the British consul for protection. There were fraternal reasons why the marshal and I could talk confidentially, and, though he had no right to do it, he told me that he expected to have a warrant for my arrest in the morning. That made it serious business for me, as I had no desire to become entangled with the authorities even though I had full confidence in Fisk's ability to get me out of trouble, and I determined to get away, and take my ship with me.

The marshal left three watchmen on the ship to guarantee her continued presence. Edward Coffee, my steward, was a man who knew every angle of his business. Soon after dark he served the watchers with a lunch and followed it with a bottle of wine which had been carefully prepared, though no one

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could have told it had been tampered with. In ten minutes they were asleep and in twice that time we were out in the stream and headed south. We cleared the Virginia capes at daylight, aroused the surprised guards and loaned them a boat in which they rowed ashore. There was no government ship in those waters that could catch us so we proceeded on our course without any misgivings, leaving it to Fisk to straighten matters out. We delivered the cargo about sixty miles west of Cape Maysi and then went to Halifax, Nova Scotia, where I wired to Fisk to ascertain the lay of the land. He replied that he had "squared" things with the authorities and it was safe for me to return but that it would be best to leave the ship at Halifax for a while. I accordingly took the train for New York and in two or three weeks Captain Williams followed with the "Stuart," which had been restored to her real self, though painted a different color than when she left New York.

Our expeditions with the "Stuart" had been so successful that the Spanish Government, through its minister at Washington, had arranged with the Delamater Iron Works, on the Hudson, for the purchase of several small gunboats, each carrying two guns, which were to operate against filibusters. We had

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not lost a single cargo, either while operating with the Junta or independently of it. In some instances the Spanish cavalry swooped down and captured part of the shipment before the rebels could get all of it back into the bush, but that was in no sense our fault. Fisk had learned the terms of the Spanish minister's contract with the Delamater Company and the date that was specified for the delivery of the gunboats, but we did not know of a secret and verbal understanding by which they were to be delivered several weeks in advance of that time. The result was that on my next, and last, trip to Cuba I ran full tilt into one of the new boats, as I was not looking for them.

We raised Cape Maysi late in the afternoon and were close inshore and not far from the lighthouse when a little steamer came racing up on our starboard bow. I saw that she was flying the Spanish flag but that meant nothing in those waters and I paid no attention to her, as she was nothing like the ordinary Spanish type of gunboat, for which I was on the lookout. She steamed up to windward of us and I opened my eyes when she fired a blank shot across our bows, as a signal to heave to. I promptly ran up the British flag and kept on my course, whereupon she sent a solid shot just ahead of us. Then I hove to and a lieutenant and boat's crew came

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aboard. It looked like a bad case. While the lieutenant was being rowed to the "Stuart" I had a lot of black powder stored under the break of the poop, just below my cabin, and laid a fuse to it. I did this primarily for the purpose of running a strong bluff on the Spaniards, but I had made up my mind that if it came to the worst I would blow up my ship and take a long chance on getting ashore in the small boats. I figured that the commander of the gunboat would stop to pick up those of his crew who were sent skyward by the explosion and that this would allow sufficient time for some of us, at least, to escape, which was much better than to sit still and have all hands captured and executed.

When the lieutenant came aboard he called for my papers and I gave him the usual forged set, which indicated British registry and concealed the nature of the cargo. He was not satisfied and ordered me to open the hatches, which I refused to do. He procured some tools and was having his men open them when I gave the signal to lower the boats quickly, and man them. The Spaniards looked on in wonder but interposed no objection to our hurried departure. Then I ostentatiously lit the fuse in my cabin and as I was getting into my boat I said to the lieutenant:

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"I wish you luck in going over my cargo. You'll be in hell in just about three minutes."

Without asking a question or saying a word the young officer bundled his men and himself into his boat and I lost as little time in hustling my men back onto the "Stuart" and pulling out the fuse, which was a long one, as I had a notion things might turn out just as they did. Had he not flown into a state of panic, which is characteristic of the Latin races, the lieutenant could have pulled out the sputtering fuse, just as I did, and removed the danger, at the same time putting the rest of us in a bad way; but it seemed that such an idea never occurred to him. It was simply a case of matching American nerve against Spanish blood, and I won. The gunboat was half a mile to windward and a choppy sea was running so the lieutenant had his hands full managing his boat and had no time to try to make any signals. I ordered full speed ahead and ran across the gunboat's bows, dipping our ensign as we passed. The commander of the gunboat, thinking everything was all right, returned our salute and dropped down to pick up the lieutenant. When he got to the small boat and discovered the trick that had been played on him he sent a shot after us, which went a mile away, and gave chase, but it was no use. It was get-

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ting dusk by that time and in fifteen minutes it was dark, for there is no twilight in the tropics. I swung around in a wide circle, picked up a little inlet near Gonaives Bay in which the rebels were waiting, and had my cargo unloaded and was headed back for New York before daylight.

Some of the filibustering trips were made at long intervals, on account of the difficulties encountered by the Junta in raising funds, and between two of them, in 1867, I went to Washington, at the invitation of Leonard Swett, of Chicago, and Dr. Fowler, of Springfield, Illinois, and was introduced by them to President Johnson. Swett and Fowler were trying to line up Illinois for Johnson, and Fisk thought it might strengthen his hand in Washington to have me meet the President and offer to assist him in any way I could. A few days later the President sent for me and asked me to become his confidential political agent. He frankly said he doubted the accuracy of reports which had been made to him regarding the feeling in the Middle West toward his nomination for the presidency, and he wanted me to visit that section and advise him as to the real sentiment, with particular reference to Illinois. I accepted, being flattered, I presume, by the idea of being in confidential relations with a President. To give

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me a standing and clothe me with an air of mystery he appointed me acting chief of the Secret Service, from which he had removed General W. P. Wood. "Andy" was careful to explain, however, that my appointment was not to be announced or generally known for the time being and that he did not want me to bother about the ordinary operations of the Secret Service Bureau, which were in charge of Colonel L. C. Whitely, later appointed chief. Within two months I reported to the President that his friends had flattered him, that he did not have a chance of carrying Illinois, and that sentiment was running strongly against him throughout the West. The insight I thus gained into politics quickly convinced me that it was too dishonorable and not exciting enough for me, so I resigned and went back to filibustering.

If Johnson had ever had a chance of being nominated to succeed himself in the place of power to which he was elevated by the murder of Lincoln, it would have been destroyed by his "swing around the circle," when he went to Chicago, in 1866, to attend a cornerstone laying in honor of Stephen A. Douglas. During the trip he quarrelled violently with every one who disagreed with his reconstruction policy and descended, in his speeches, to the level of

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the ward heeler. I never was paid for this secret service work, nor for the expenses I incurred, and my failure to receive vouchers for my salary made it apparent to me that my appointment had not been a formal one. The experience was interesting, however, as a temporary diversion, and I was satisfied to regard it as a *quid pro quo* for favors Fisk and I had received from the Administration, and which we might expect to continue to receive, and let it go at that. I have no doubt that Mr. Johnson looked at the matter in the same light.

While the "Stuart" was laid up for repairs at one time, during the Cuban expeditions, Capt. Williams and I took the famous "Virginus" out on her first trip, with a cargo of arms from the Junta. The Junta wanted me to keep her but I refused, on account of her size. She was larger than the "Stuart" but no faster, and had quarters for a considerable number of men outside of her crew, which the "Stuart" had not. I foresaw that they would want to use her in transporting men, and to put her into that service would greatly increase the risk of her capture. The ideal vessel for filibustering purposes is a small, stout ship of light draft and high speed, without room, to say nothing of accommodations, for passengers. A large hold is not required, for a mighty valuable cargo of

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arms can be stowed away in a comparatively small space. The man in command of a filibustering expedition must be prepared for any emergency and needs to have his wits about him every minute. If he is to succeed he cannot think about anything except his cargo and its delivery; he cannot afford to have any men hanging onto his coat and dividing and diverting his attention. Transporting troops is a very different business from carrying arms, and my experience has convinced me that the two cannot well be combined on one ship.

Carrying contraband is dangerous business under the most favorable conditions. The hand of every nation is raised against you; though you be an American the flag of your own country, even, can give you no protection, for you are engaged in an illegal act, however much it may stand for the advancement of humanity and the spread of liberty. Save for those with whom you are allied, and who necessarily are few in number, else they would be recognized as belligerents and given the rights of war, any one who happens along the sea's highway is liable to take a shot at you or try to capture you, on general principles. Therefore the commander of a filibustering expedition must regard desperate chances as a part of the daily routine, but he is unwise

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to add to his risks by complicating his mission. He must, too, be in the business chiefly for the love of the adventure it provides as royal payment, for the financial returns, except in cases out of the ordinary, are as nothing compared with the dangers that are encountered.

Just as I had expected, the "Virginus" after many narrow escapes was finally captured by the Spaniards on October 31, 1873, as she was about to land a mixed cargo of men and arms near Santiago. General Cespedes, the life of the revolution, and three of his best fighting chiefs, Generals Ryan, Varona, and Del Sal, who happened to be on board, were summarily executed. This was done, it was claimed, under prior sentences, but as a matter of fact there was not so much as a mockery of a trial, either at the time they were put to death or previously. All of the others who were on board were tried for piracy and promptly convicted, of course. Within a week after the seizure of the ship, Capt. Joseph Fry, her American commander, thirty-six of his crew, and sixteen "passengers," were lined up and shot to death, with an excess of brutality. The rest of the prisoners, who were to have been similarly disposed of, were saved, not through intervention from Washington whence it should have come, but by the timely arrival of a

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British warship, whose commander refused to permit any further butchery. England peremptorily compelled the Spanish Government to pay a substantial indemnity for the British subjects who had been thus lawlessly executed, while the United States Government, as an evidence of the protection it gave American citizens in those days, waited twenty-five years before taking vengeance on Spain for the murder of Captain Fry and his companions. But for the "Virginus" Massacre and the bad blood it engendered between America and Spain, Cuba might still be taking orders from Madrid instead of from Washington; had it not been for that never forgotten butchery the blowing up of the "Maine" might have been regarded as an accident.

Along about 1868, after it had run half its length, the Ten Years' War began to bog down. The Cubans were out of funds and appeared to have lost heart, and it looked as though the revolt would be another failure. There was nothing else doing in this part of the world in which I was interested so I decided to go to Europe, being attracted by the prospect of war between France and Germany and the adventurous possibilities which it suggested.

CHAPTER III

IN LEAGUE WITH THE SPANISH PRETENDER

DURING the Cuban filibustering days I gained more notoriety than I desired, even though it really was not a great deal, and as I did not wish to be known as a trouble-maker on the other side, where the laws against the carrying of contraband were being rigidly enforced on account of the recent "Alabama" affair, I lost my identity while crossing the Atlantic. When I reached London in the latter part of 1868 I was "George MacFarlane," and in order that I might have an address and ostensible occupation I established the commercial house of George MacFarlane & Co., at 10 Corn Hill. My partner, who really was only a clerk, was a young Englishman named Cunningham, for whom I had been able to do a good turn while I was living in Chicago. I opened an account in the London & Westminster Bank with an initial deposit of close to seventy-five thousand pounds, which gave me a financial standing.

In order to establish my respectability with the British Board of Trade, which exercised a watchful eye and general supervision over the enforcement of

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the maritime laws, and to build up a reputation for eminent business respectability which would serve as a cover for the illicit but much more exciting operations in which I expected to engage as soon as opportunity offered, and at the same time to throw me naturally in contact with shipping concerns under the most favorable conditions, I bought several small vessels and began shipping general cargoes to and from the Continent, either on my own account or for others. Fate was kind to me in throwing in my way the little steamer "Leckwith," which I bought at a bargain. She had been built as a yacht for a nobleman but did not suit him. She was not large enough to be used as a passenger boat and her depth of hold was not sufficient to make her profitable as a freighter, but she was exactly the ship I wanted as a carrier of contraband. She registered five hundred and twenty tons and could do seventeen knots when she was pushed. She was small enough to go anywhere, fast enough to beat anything that was likely to chase her, and big enough for my purposes. Until the day I buried her, years afterward, as the only means of destroying damning evidence, she served me faithfully and well, and I doubt if any ship, before or since, has made so much money for her owner.

One of the first shipping firms with which I became

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acquainted was that of H. Nickell & Son, of Leadenhall Street. They were speculators as well as merchants and I cultivated them, without having to wait long for results. Encouraged by the insurrection against the Bourbons, which had resulted in the abdication and flight to France of Queen Isabella, Don Carlos, the Spanish Pretender, was just then, in 1869, preparing to make his last fight for the long coveted crown of Spain. His chief agent had bought all of the arms and ammunition he could pay for from Kynoch & Co., of Birmingham, which establishment is now, I believe, owned by Joseph Chamberlain and his son and brother, though conducted under the old name, and had contracted with Nickell & Son for their delivery on the northern coast of Spain. They had lost one cargo, through the watchfulness of a Spanish warship, and had nearly come to grief with another, just before I became acquainted with them.

The Pretender's agent then proposed that Don Carlos pay for the arms when they were delivered, instead of at the factory, as before, and suggested to Nickell & Son that they enter into a contract on that basis, to cover all future purchases.

Old man Nickell was considering this proposition when I met him and, suspecting that I had ideas regarding the sailing of ships that went beyond the

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uninteresting routine of strictly legitimate commerce, he told me about it, after we had come to know and understand each other a bit. Naturally, it appealed to me and it did not take us long to reach an agreement which, if it would not have blocked our plans and we had wanted to follow the foolish English fashion, would have enabled us to advertise ourselves as "Purveyors Extraordinary of Munitions of War to His Royal Majesty, Don Carlos." It was agreed that Nickell should buy the arms while I should furnish the ship and deliver them. We were to charge a price commensurate with the risk we assumed, with something added,—for we had reason to believe the Pretender had plenty of money,—and divide the proceeds.

It was stipulated that the first consignment should be delivered to Don Carlos himself at his headquarters near Bilbao, and before accepting the cargo I went there on an iron-ore steamer to reconnoitre. I found that the Pretender's retreat in the mountains back from Bilbao was in the very heart of that section of Spain which was most loyal to him. Carlist sentiment was almost unanimous in the Provinces of Vizcaya, Alava, and Guipuzcoa, and strong in the adjoining Provinces of Navarre, Catalonia, and Aragon, so there was nothing to fear once we succeeded in get-

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ting up the river. Even the city of Bilbao was largely composed of Carlist supporters, but the forts which commanded the river there and at Portugalete, the deep-water port of Bilbao on the coast at the mouth of the river, were manned by unfriendly troops. The two Generals, Prim and Serrano, who were the real rulers of Spain and who placed Prince Amadeo, son of the King of Italy, on the throne a year or so later, were as much opposed to the Carlists as they had been to the Bourbons. They did not propose that the Pretender should gain any ground during the troubled period which they had brought about by the expulsion of Queen Isabella. They knew he was trying to import arms from England and they had so many warships patrolling the northern coast that it practically amounted to a blockade; but, after my experience at Charleston, I did not regard that as a serious matter.

Only a small and light-draft ship could get up the river to the point at which the arms were to be delivered, which was a few miles above Bilbao. I did not care to try it with the "Leckwith" so I chartered a smaller steamer which greatly resembled the "Santa Marta," a Spanish coastwise ship. To avoid suspicion as to their real destination the rifles and cartridges, in boxes which gave no indication of their

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contents, were shipped to Antwerp, and I picked them up there. As soon as we were out of sight of land I repainted my ship and made some slight changes in her upper works, until she looked almost exactly like the "Santa Marta." That name was then painted on her bows and the Spanish flag was hoisted over her. With this precaution I figured that we would avoid any trouble with the forts or any warships we might encounter, and we did; in fact we did not see a single warship. Of course, if we had happened to meet the real "Santa Marta," we would have had to run for it at least, and it might have been more serious than that, but I simply took a chance that we would not run into her. We saluted the forts as we passed them and they responded without taking two looks at us.

We got over the bar at Bilbao with very little to spare under our keel and went on up the river to the appointed place, where we tied up so close to the steep bank that we threw a plank ashore. A band of gypsies — Gitanos — were camped close by, and in ten minutes they were all over the ship. Among them was a singularly beautiful girl to whom I was drawn. She followed me around the ship, which did not annoy me at all, and insisted on telling my fortune. When I consented she told me, among a lot of

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other things, that I would be paid a large sum of money in the mountains, and assassinated. Her dire prediction did not cause me a moment's anxiety, as I have no faith in human ability to discern what the inhuman Fates have prescribed for us, but she was greatly worried by what the cards had told her and begged me, almost with tears in her eyes, to stay away from the mountains. As I then had no thought of going into the hills I assured her that I would do as she advised, whereat she was much relieved.

No messenger from Don Carlos came down to meet us, as had been agreed upon, and after waiting three or four days I sent one of the gypsies to his camp to advise him that the cargo awaited his orders, and the payment for it. He replied that he would send for it and that I should come to his headquarters for the money, as he wished to consult with me about further shipments. He sent along one of his aides to escort me to his camp. The Gitano girl's warning had made so little impression on me that I did not recall it. It seemed natural enough that Don Carlos should want more arms, as we had expected he would, and that he should want to give personal directions as to where and when they were to be delivered, and without any thought of danger I set forth at once. George Brown, my sailing master, a gigantic Nova

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Scotian, and Bill Heather, the second officer, accompanied me, as they wished to see the country and, perhaps, the famous Pretender.

The Carlist camp was located well up in the mountains, nearly twelve miles from where we were tied up. Following the aide, we walked diagonally away from the river for about six miles, which brought us to the foothills. Then we switched off to the left for a mile and turned sharply to the right into a canyon, which we followed for three miles or more when it turned to the right again, and a two-mile tramp landed us at the headquarters of the claimant to the Spanish crown. The camp stretched away through the woods that covered the plateau to which we had climbed but we had no opportunity to inspect it, nor to form any intelligent idea as to the number of troops, for right at the head of the canyon was a large square tent, surmounted with a flag bearing the Carlist arms, which we rightly guessed was occupied by the Commander-in-Chief.

We were halted there and after a short wait I was ceremoniously ushered into the august presence of the Pretender. He was standing as I entered, for impressive effect rather than from courtesy, and I am compelled to admit that in personal appearance he had a great advantage over any real King I have

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ever seen. Perhaps forty years old, he was in the full glory of physical manhood; six feet tall, powerfully built, and unmistakably a Spaniard. He had a full beard and moustache as black as his hair, large dark eyes, a Grecian nose, and a broad high forehead which suggested a higher degree of intellectuality than he possessed. But his cold face was cruel and unscrupulous and I felt—what I afterward found was fact—that his adherents followed him chiefly from principle and were dominated much more by fear than by personal loyalty. Yet, despite a face forbidding to any keen student of human nature, he was an imposing figure, with evidences of royalty that were exaggerated by his manner. He greeted me with frigid formality in contradiction of the warm welcome I had expected, as due a saviour of the Carlist cause, and his first words, spoken in fair English, were a curt statement that he had no money but would pay for my cargo through his London agent within two months.

Chagrined at the manner of my reception and surprised at his attitude, I inquired, with some heat: “How is it possible, Your Majesty, that you are not prepared to carry out the agreement made with your agent who was acting, as he convinced us, with your full authority? Our contract stipulates that my cargo

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is to be paid for in cash and unless this is complied with I cannot deliver it and we will be compelled to accept no further orders from you."

"If my agent made such a contract as that," he retorted with assumed indignation, "he did it on his own responsibility alone and I refuse to be bound by it. I have stated my terms. If you do not care to accede to them you can go to the devil."

It was plain that I would make no headway in that direction so I went about on the other tack, using honeyed words in place of harsh ones.

"I beg Your Majesty's pardon," I said with much deference, "for momentarily losing my temper. It was due to the heat and the long tramp. I am not accustomed to such enervating exercise. I see now that Your Majesty is joking. It could not be otherwise, for the word of a King of Spain is sacred."

The flattery went home, as I supposed, and while he repeated that he had stated the exact situation, his manner was more friendly.

"You carry the joke admirably, Your Majesty," I continued. "Had you not been born to rule you would have won fame as an actor. Your mock seriousness would, I fear, cause real seriousness at Madrid if General Prim knew of the extent to which you indulge your capacity for humor."

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When he persisted in his assertion that he was in earnest and did not propose to live up to the contract, I pointed out to him, as discreetly as possible, what the result of such a course would be. "I can only again congratulate you on your art," I said, "for it would be ridiculous for me to believe you speak seriously. Failure to keep the agreement made by your agent even though, as I now believe, he acted without explicit instructions from you [which I did not believe at all] would destroy your excellent credit, not only with my firm but with all other dealers in revolutionary supplies, and that, of course, is not to be thought of. On the other hand, by paying for this cargo, in compliance with the contract, you will establish your credit more firmly than ever, and I have no doubt you will be able to make your own terms for further shipments. I know that Your Majesty is not only very honest but very wise."

This argument appeared to convince him and, with a smile as though he really had been only joking, he summoned a venerable Jew, evidently his treasurer, who looked like the original of all pictures of Shylock, and, speaking so rapidly in Spanish that I could hardly understand him, ordered him to pay me twenty-eight thousand pounds, the amount called for by the manifest. The Jew returned in a few minutes

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with the exact amount, chiefly in Spanish notes of large denomination but with enough gold to make quite a load. While I was waiting for the money he told me he would want thirteen thousand more stands of arms and a million cartridges, which were to be shipped in two cargoes at times and places to be indicated by his agent in London, who would arrange the terms of payment, under specific instructions, to avoid any further misunderstandings. I assured him that they would be sent when and where he wanted them. With the transaction completed Don Carlos dramatically waved me out.

The officer who had piloted us to the camp suggested that we could find our way back to the ship without any trouble, as the trail was clearly defined, and we started back alone. Before we had gone twenty steps Brown asked if I had been paid in cash. I pointed to my bulging pockets and told him I undoubtedly had. He then confessed that he thought we were "in for it." Six cavalrymen, he said, had started down the trail not long before I left Don Carlos' tent, and from the action attending their movement he believed that they had been sent out to waylay and rob and probably murder us in the deep canyon into which the ravine from the camp turned. In a flash I recalled the prediction of the gypsy girl

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and the promise I had given her. I laughed at myself for the spasm of something like fear that came into my mind, yet I was undeniably nervous, for Brown was not a man to form foolish fancies or become unduly alarmed about anything. None of us was armed and if Brown's suspicion was correct, which I was slow to believe, the troopers would make short work of us.

We had turned a corner that put us out of sight of the camp and were walking slowly along discussing, with deep gravity on the part of Brown and Heather and a partly assumed mock seriousness on my part, the possibilities of the situation and the general cussedness of Spanish character, when I saw a dark face peering at us through the underbrush that matted the trail on both sides. I am not sure, but I think I jumped; anyway, I know I was startled. At the first glance the face looked like nothing but one of the troopers we had been talking about but in an instant I recognized the Gitano girl who had told my fortune and begged me not to go into the mountains. She beckoned to us and we answered her summons, without any unseemly haste, perhaps, but certainly without any delay. Uttering not a word she plunged off at right angles to the trail into deep woods, in which we would have been hopelessly lost

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in ten minutes, with the three of us following her in Indian file. She led us over a hill and across a wide depression and then over another much higher mountain. There was not so much as a suggestion of a path and it was hard going, yet none of us complained. She brought us out to the trail at the point where we had made our first turn into the foothills. From there it was a straight road to the ship, with open country all around, so there could be no fear of ambushade or attack.

The tension was relieved and the girl, with tears in her eyes that betrayed her real emotions, threw her arms around my neck and reproached me passionately for violating my promise to her and exposing myself to what she said would have been certain death but for her intervention. It was with difficulty that I released myself from her embrace, while Brown and Heather discreetly and rapidly walked on ahead of us. She said she heard where I had gone when she went to the ship in the morning to see me, and knowing what the plot would be, she had taken the short-cut through the mountains, by which we had returned, to intercept us as we were leaving the camp. The gypsies were loyal to the Carlists through fear of them so she could get no help from her own people, but she had prevailed on her

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brother to steal up the trail through the canyon to see what happened there, not to verify her suspicions, as she explained, but to prove to us that she was right. An hour after we reached the ship her brother returned and reported to her that six cavalrymen had come down the ravine from the camp and concealed themselves alongside the trail in the canyon just below the turn. After a long wait one of them galloped back toward the camp. He soon returned, after discovering that we had left the trail, and the others went back to camp with him. To Brown and Heather that seemed convincing proof of what would have happened to us but for the gypsy girl; my own notion about it was that what had happened had to happen, and I had not been killed simply because my time had not arrived. Therefore I felt nothing of gratitude; but when I came to analyze my real feeling toward the young woman, whose wondrous black eyes seemed to reflect all of the mystery and witchery of those glorious ages that died with the departure of the Moors, and were silently eloquent of a fine civilization of old centuries, I found that the deep impression her physical charms had made on me had been intensified by her mad affection for me. This made it no easy matter to leave her, but I had no notion of taking her with me, and had to get bluff

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Bill Heather to half carry her ashore just before the gang plank was pulled in.

Most of the arms had been removed from the ship while we were away and turned over to the guard Don Carlos had sent down. The rest of the cargo was jerked out with all speed and as soon as the last box was on the bank we got under way. We had not gone a quarter of a mile, moving slowly on account of the tortuous channel, when the gypsies came running after us, shouting and waving at us to come back. The cause of their excitement was soon discovered in the presence of my Gitano girl, who had stolen on board at the last minute, while I was below inspecting the engines, and concealed herself until we were under way.

My first impulse was to stop the ship and set her ashore but before I could give the order she came running to me and declared, with an imperious air of authority: "I am going with you, so pay no attention to my foolish people."

"But, my dear girl, you cannot do that," I protested. "I shall be accused of having stolen you."

"You cannot steal what belongs to you," was her quick reply.

"But I am going to a strange land where there are

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none of your people and where your language is a strange tongue. You will be lonely and die."

"I never shall be lonely where you are," she exclaimed with all the passion of her romantic soul, "and I shall not die unless they kill me here. If you go on I go with you; if I go ashore you go with me."

Never before having encountered such affection I was content to let her have her way. Her tribesmen followed us, and called down all manner of curious curses on our heads, until they were convinced we had no thought of stopping, when two of them galloped on ahead of us toward Bilbao. They went to the fort, evidently, and told the officer in command that we were aiding Don Carlos, for as soon as we got within hailing distance we were ordered to heave to. We paid no attention to the command, of course, and as the only effect of a warning gun which followed was to increase our speed, they sent half a dozen shots at us, as a matter of duty. One of them shattered the fore-topmast and brought the fore-rigging down by the run; the others went wild. We were fired at from a height and dropping shots seldom hit, though when they do they are generally disastrous. With everything dragging forward, until the gear could be cleared away, we proceeded down

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the widening river at full speed. Greatly to my surprise we were not even hailed by the fort at the mouth of the river, where I had looked for some serious business, and we continued happily on our way to London.

Soon after our arrival there I established the Gitano girl, to whom I had become deeply attached, in a cottage near Chalk Farm, not far from the city. I left her amply supplied with money and there were other gypsies near there with whom she could fraternize. It is an evidence of the strange way in which my life has been ordered that I never saw her again. When I returned, at the first opportunity, in about two years, I found nothing but a pile of blackened ruins where the cottage had stood. The Gitano girl's beauty had made her known to the people who lived near by but they had not seen her for more than a year, and the neighboring gypsies had moved away, no one knew where. I am not much given to regrets, being content to let my destiny work itself out free from senseless protests, yet if my wishes had been consulted I would not have lost my glorious Gitano girl. Possibly the ruined cottage symbolized a love that had burned itself out or it may be that somewhere her spirit is waiting for mine. "Why?" and "When?" are questions that I never attempt to answer.

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That experience finished me with Don Carlos. Seven or eight years later, when I was selling arms to Montenegro and Turkey, and not long after he had finally been driven out of Spain, I met him at Claridge's Hotel in London, as he came in from attending church at the Greek Chapel. He recognized me and, after pausing for a second, offered me his hand, but I refused it.

"What do you mean?" he demanded angrily.

"I mean, Your Royal Highness," I replied, with some sarcasm, "that if I am here to shake hands with you it is through no good will of yours, for you tried to have me assassinated in your mountains." He looked at me hard for a moment, shrugged his shoulders, and walked on.

After settling up with Nickell on the Don Carlos expedition I devoted myself, for a few months, to legitimate commerce. I had bachelor quarters on Russell Square, in London, and divided my time between that city and Paris, where I opened a branch of my mercantile and shipping house at 30 Rue Vivienne. While in Paris I lived at the Grand Hotel and loafed at Charley Wells' American restaurant nearby on the Rue Scribe. In both London and Paris I read and heard considerable about a picturesque South American named Guzman Blanco. He had

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been driven out of Venezuela, of which country he was Vice-President, and was said to be then planning a revolt through which he expected to gain the presidency. I was anxious to meet him but was unable to do so, as both of us were moving about a great deal. I had thought of Venezuela before I visited Europe and, attracted by the promised revolt, I decided that I would go to that country as soon as the Franco-Prussian War, which then was almost ready to break out, was over, or before that if it lasted longer than I thought it would. Just before the war began I bought three cargoes of wines at Bordeaux and sent them to London, where I sold them later at a good profit.

During the brief war, which began on July 19, 1870, and ended in the capitulation of the French at Sedan on September first, I had three ships busy with honest cargoes, but I did not get a chance to do any contraband running until just before its close. The Austrian Army was then being rearmed with the improved Werndle rifle, and thousands of the old guns were stored in the arsenal at Vienna.

Nickell had bought a lot of them at a bargain but on account of the war Austria would not release them without a guarantee that they were not to be used against Germany. I was led to believe I could sell

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five thousand of these rifles to the Committee of Safety at Bordeaux ; so I bought that number from Nickell and, with an order for their delivery, I went to Trieste in the "Leckwith." Charles Lever, the novelist, was then the British consul at Trieste, where he died a year or two later. On the pretence that the arms were for Japan, and that I would be able to establish that fact within a few days, I secured the removal of the guns from Vienna to the Trieste arsenal, which was only a few hundred yards from the dock at which the "Leckwith" was tied up. However, to get them over that short distance and then to get away with them was a problem that puzzled me. I was mulling over it one day in a *café* when a maudlin young Englishman, who was sitting at the table with me and had been trying to talk to me, pulled out a passport, all plastered with red seals and wax in the old Continental fashion. It was a most formidable and ceremonious looking document and the instant I saw it an inspiration seized me. From the most taciturn I became the most jovial of companions and plied the Englishman with wine until he fell sound asleep.

Then I took the passport from his pocket and hustled off to the arsenal. I had been assiduously cultivating the officers there and was delighted to

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find the young lieutenant with whom I was best acquainted in charge of the guard. I told him I would have the order for the release of the rifles within an hour and proceeded to celebrate by getting him in the same state in which I had found the convenient Englishman. I sent word to Lorensen, sailing master of the "Leckwith," to get up a full head of steam, and engaged a dozen big wagons to be at the arsenal in an hour. I arrived with the wagons, waved the gaudy passport in front of the young officer's face, and without trying to read it he told me to go ahead. We made quick work of getting the boxed arms to the ship and under her hatches, for the guard was changed at four o'clock and my sleepy young friend would be succeeded by an officer who was sober and in his right mind. We were not quite fast enough, however, for just as we were pulling out the new officer of the guard came running down the dock, shouting that he wanted to see the order for the release of the arms. As he was well out of arm's-reach I made a fussy effort to hand him the passport. Then I opened it out and showed it to him, all the while explaining that it was all right.

He went away shaking his head and I anticipated trouble at the fort at the entrance to the harbor, at the head of the Adriatic, as the channel through which

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we had to run was narrow. The fort occupied a commanding position and had high walls from the water's edge, with a free bastion high up. Sure enough, a shot whizzed across our bows as we reached the fort. Immediately I swung the ship in and before they saw I was not going to come to anchor, as they had supposed, we were so close under the walls that they could not bring their guns to bear on us. It was only a very few minutes, however, until they could reach us with their seaward guns, and they let go at us without any delay. The second shot took a bite out of the mainmast and it looked as though they had found our range and would smash us in a jiffy; but the brave little ship was tearing through the water at her top speed and, as we were going directly away from them, was hard to hit. Shells splashed uncomfortably close to us for a few minutes, but save for one shot that carried away some of the ginger-bread work on the stern we were not struck again, and were soon out of reach of anything like accurate fire. The "Leckwith" had stood her first baptism of fire in a way that augured well for her future, and the sign was a good one.

The arms were rushed to Bordeaux and turned over to the Committee of Safety only a few days before the battle of Sedan. I was sufficiently enthu-

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siastic in the cause of France to land them without a proper guarantee of payment, and, in fact, they never were paid for. Everything was turmoil; so after waiting a few days I placed the bill for the arms with an attorney and hurried on to London, *en route* for Venezuela, where I expected to find more excitement, in which hope I was in no way disappointed. I placed the "Leckwith" and my ships in the hands of Nickell & Co., for charter, and took the first steamer for New York.

CHAPTER IV

LAWLESS LATIN AMERICA

THE first word that reached me on my arrival in New York near the end of September, 1870, was that my wife was seriously ill at her old home in Illinois. She had been on the Continent with relatives of old man Nickell, the ship broker and contraband dealer, during most of the time that I was messing around with Don Carlos and the French, and started home two months ahead of me. She had a very bad trip, her ship having been twenty-six days at sea, and as she was not a good sailor she suffered severely and contracted an illness which proved fatal. I went to her at once and remained at her side until the end, three weeks later. Her death was a severe blow to me. She was an exceptional woman, in that she had much good sense, was not given to chatter, and was a delightful companion. Though she had never become quite reconciled to my adventurously active life, I was devoted to her, and if she had lived I might eventually have settled down and become a respectable and self-respecting business man, in which

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class, I am bound to say, I would have had little company.

When I returned to New York after the funeral I was greatly depressed and was in a mood for anything that offered excitement. A few days later I found some diversion through a chance meeting with Frank (Francis Lay) Norton, just after he had gone broke in John Morrissey's uptown gambling house. He knew me, by reputation and through the old Cuban Junta under which both of us had operated, as well as I knew him, and we soon became friends. Later we became partners in some of the most gloriously exciting exploits in which I have been fortunate enough to participate. Norton was a natural-born pirate, and he looked the part. He was then about forty years old, five feet, eight inches tall, thin and wiry and possessed of remarkable strength. His eyes, hair, beard, and moustache were as black as coal. You could feel his eyes looking through you and would almost lose a realizing sense of what was in your mind; it was not hypnotism nor mental or physical dominance but he could almost read your most secret thoughts. He was completely irreligious, cynical, and cold-blooded. Under the most severe tests a slight twitching of the eyes was his only sign of excitement. He was daring to the supreme degree

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but never foolishly reckless, and I don't believe he ever experienced the sensation of fear. He was, too, as he needed to be, almost a dead shot in off-hand firing with rifle or pistol, and an expert swordsman.

When I first met him he was wild about the China Sea, where he had spent several thrilling years and made several fortunes, only to lose them as soon as he could find a gambling house, for he was a faro fiend of the most virulent type. He declared that was the only part of the world for us, with regard both to excitement and money, and suggested that we form a partnership and go out there "to do anything that came handy." Though I had spent money like the proverbial drunken sailor, or worse, for I was born with all the tastes of an aristocrat, I was then worth several hundred thousand dollars, while Norton was worth nothing, so I could not quite see a partnership such as he had in mind. Nor was he able to tempt me away from Venezuela. I had heard so much of that country and of Guzman Blanco that my heart was set on going there before I undertook to explore any other strange lands. The upshot of our many discussions was that I sent Norton to London to take command of the "Leckwith" until I was ready to join him, when it was agreed we should go out in the yacht to his beloved China Sea. I had brought Lars

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Lorensen, the former sailing master of the "Leck-with" and a brave and loyal Norseman, with me from the other side, as I expected to have need of him in South America.

After Norton's departure I bought the fore and aft schooner yacht "Juliette," about eighty tons, fitted her out at New London, Connecticut, for a six months' cruise, and with Lorensen as sailing master, started for Bermuda to test her seaworthiness. We reached there in five days and proceeded to St. Thomas, where I hoped to find Guzman Blanco. He was not there so we went on to Curacoa, which was then, as it has been ever since, a revolutionary rendezvous. We arrived there in the latter part of December. I found that Guzman was there, and James Faxon, the American consul, introduced me to him at the Willemstad Club, where he was playing billiards with Gen. Pulgar, his chief-of-staff. Before meeting him I had familiarized myself with recent Venezuelan history, as far as it concerned him. I learned that Guzman Blanco's father, Dr. Antonio Guzman, began political life as private secretary to Simon Bolivar, the famous "Liberator," and had been prominent in Venezuelan politics for fifty years. He aided in the election of Jose Tadeo Monagas to the presidency and at his request his son, Guzman Blanco,

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was appointed Secretary of Legation at Washington, where he lived during 1856 and 1857. In the latter year Dr. Guzman had a row with Monagas and was expelled from the country. He went to St. Thomas and was soon joined by his son. There they met Gen. Falcon, who too had been banished by Monagas and was planning a revolt. When Falcon invaded Venezuela in 1859, in what became known as the "Five Years' War," Guzman Blanco went with him. In a succession of brilliant victories young Guzman demonstrated his great bravery and military genius and he soon was at the head of a division, later becoming second in command. Falcon entered Caracas in triumph in April, 1863, after devastating most of the country, and was elected President, with Guzman Blanco as Vice-President. In addition to this title Guzman was made Minister of Finance and of Foreign Relations, and in 1864, and again in 1867, he went to Europe to settle the national debt and arrange a new loan. While he was away the second time the old Monagas faction came back to life with enough strength to force Falcon to abandon Caracas, and when Guzman returned from London in 1868 a mob surrounded his house and stoned it. He fled to Europe. He had just returned and was planning an invasion of Venezuela when I met him.

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I told him of my efforts the year before to meet him in London and Paris and their purpose; that I was running contraband, more to satisfy my love of adventure than as a business, and I believed I could be useful to him; that South America was prolific of revolutions and I was ambitious to have a hand in them. After he had studied me, asked all sorts of questions, and apparently satisfied himself that I could be relied on, Guzman told me, in a general way, of his plans and asked me to secure for him three thousand old Remington rifles and five hundred thousand cartridges and deliver them as quickly as possible at Curacoa. We sailed for New York the day after the order was given, early in January, and made the trip in just a month. I bought the arms from P. D. Orvis & Co., of Whitehall Street, and we were on our way back within a week. We made the return trip in twenty-eight days and reached Curacoa just before the sunset gun was fired. The entrance to the harbor at Curacoa is very narrow and in those days it was, and I believe still is, closed during the night by a great chain, which was raised at sunset and lowered at sunrise by a powerful windlass.

I went ashore at once and to the club where, instead of Guzman Blanco, whom I expected would be waiting for me, I found Gen. Ortega, who was with

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Guzman when I first met him and seemed to be fully in his confidence. Ortega handed me a note, bearing what purported to be the signature of Guzman, which directed me to deliver the cargo at a place to be indicated by Ortega, and stated that payment for it would be made on my cabin table. As I was not familiar with Guzman's writing I showed the signature to Dr. Leon and to old man Jesurun, who owned the shipyard, who knew Guzman well, and both of them pronounced it genuine. I had no suspicion that anything was wrong and took this precaution simply as a matter of ordinary business sense. Ortega directed me to deliver the cargo at Tucacas Point, a little peninsula about one hundred miles west of La Guaira, and said we must put to sea that night, as Guzman was anxiously awaiting the arms. Through exceptional representations of some sort to the commandante he secured the lowering of the chain, and we left at once, arriving off the point the next evening.

Ortega went ashore and returned with a request that I order off the hatches and start the unloading of the cargo in my boats and then go ashore with him and get my money. This was not in accord with my contract with Guzman or with the note Ortega had handed me, but, though I was reminded of my

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experiences with Don Carlos, I had great confidence in Guzman and did not wish to offend him, so I readily consented to the amended arrangement. As soon as the unloading was well under way I went ashore with Ortega. We climbed the bluff and walked half a mile inland to a mud-thatched hut before which a sentry was pacing. Ortega gave the countersign and we stepped inside, to find Gen. Pulgar, who was chief-of-staff for Guzman when I was introduced to him at the Willemstad Club, wrapped in a *chinchora* and smoking in a hammock. After shaking hands with him I asked where Guzman was. He replied evasively that he was there instead of Guzman. I told him briefly about my trip, in response to his queries, and then asked him for my money, which Ortega had said was waiting for me. Pulgar smiled and straightened up.

"I told Ortega to deliver that message to you," he said, "but there is no use mincing words and I may as well tell you that you are my prisoner. Your cargo is being taken care of and will be put to a very different purpose from that which you expected. As I have said, you are my prisoner but I have an offer to make you which, if you accept it, will be to your advantage. Guzman is not an old friend of yours and if you make a profit on your arms it can't make much

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difference to you whether you serve him or me. If you will join my forces, of your own free will, I will make you a colonel and give you command of a battalion and when the revolution is over I will pay you for your rifles, just as Guzman agreed to do."

"You seem to forget," I replied, "that I have a contract with Gen. Guzman which, as an honorable man, I can't go back on."

"Well, you don't appear to be in a very good position just now to carry it out, do you?" he asked.

I again inquired where Guzman was but a shrug of the shoulders was the only answer I could get to questions along that line. Not knowing as much about Venezuelan revolutions then as I did later I could not fathom this strange situation to my entire satisfaction, but it was my guess that in some way Pulgar had become arrayed against Guzman, and it turned out that I was right.

I told Pulgar that I would give him an answer at gunfire, in the morning, and spent the night with Ortega, under guard. I tried to draw him out but, evidently according to orders, he would not even talk about the weather.

At sunrise we went to see Pulgar. When asked for my decision I inquired what the result would be if his revolution failed.

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"Then I am sorry, my dear Captain, but you will lose your cargo, while I will lose my life, which is of infinitely more importance to me. But the revolution will not fail," he vehemently declared.

As though impressed by his confidence in himself, I announced that I would take a chance with him and accept his offer, with a mental reservation to escape at the first opportunity, for I did not propose to fight against Guzman, and that, I was convinced, was what it amounted to.

"That is excellent," he said, with the suggestion of a bow. After coffee I went with him to inspect his troops. He had about three thousand men, many of whom were already armed with the rifles I had brought in, and they were strung across the narrow arm of the peninsula in a line almost as ragged as their clothes. I was formally given command of a battalion of three hundred men, and an Indian servant,—I afterward found he had orders to shoot me if I attempted to escape,—was assigned to me. I accompanied Pulgar back to his headquarters, where I was given an old sword and the tarnished shoulder straps of a colonel, these constituting my uniform.

"Now that you have allied yourself with my forces," he then said, "you will have no use for your ship, for the present at least. She is still lying in the

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bay and if she remains there she is likely to be captured or cause trouble. You will therefore write a note to the officer in charge of her directing him to proceed to Curacoa and await orders. She will be safe there and," with a quizzical smile, "you will be safe here. We have no boats but we will signal your ship from the beach that we have word for it."

I had been expecting this command and, as there was nothing else for me to do, I complied with it at once. It was cutting off my only hope of rescue, though a forlorn one as I was forced to admit, but the adventure which the situation promised to develop was getting into my blood and, to tell the truth, I rather liked the idea of being left to my own resources amid such strange surroundings. Pulgar had told me during the inspection of his camp that we would probably soon be in action, as "some" troops were advancing on him, and if they did not attack him before he was ready to march, he would go out to meet them. He preferred that they should bring the fight to him for all of his men were recruited from that section and knew every foot of the country. When I came to know Venezuela I appreciated that Pulgar required no great prestige to gain a considerable following in that part of the country, for it was a veritable hotbed of revolution, ranking with Maturin in

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the east and Barquisimeto in the southwest, — three kegs of powder that could be set off by almost any man who had two legs and a sword.

I started in to drill my troops with the idea of making them a really effective fighting force, but it was the most difficult task I had ever undertaken. They were lazy to a degree that passes the understanding of an Anglo-Saxon and they had not the slightest desire to learn even the first principles of the science of war, as it is understood outside of South America. I had been trying to whip them, and others, into some sort of shape for about a week when word was brought in one morning that the enemy was approaching. We had no advance guard out, though I had tried to induce Pulgar to post one, and a few minutes after the scouts had been driven in the action became general, with the forces apparently about evenly matched in numbers. Instead of allowing me to lead my battalion, Pulgar ordered me to remain with him on a little knoll in the rear, from which he made a pretence of directing his forces. He could have accomplished much more in front, for what his men needed was a leader, not a director. They were fighting in Indian fashion, with every man shooting indiscriminately from behind a tree or log, and they paid no attention to commands. I will say for them,

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though, that they fought hard and stubbornly, but they were gradually driven back, and Pulgar, who had a terrible temper, was furious. All at once the opposing troops were largely reinforced and came with a rush which quickly converted our orderly retreat into a rout. Pulgar, cursing like a madman, dashed madly into the disorganized mass of his liberty-loving louts, with Ortega and the rest of his staff at his heels.

I was left alone and was hesitating as to what I should do when my Indian servant tugged at my trousers leg. "Follow me, Colonel," he said, "I know where there is a boat." He started off at the run and covered ground so fast that I had to gallop my horse to keep up with him. He led the way to the beach near where my cargo had been landed and pushed a native boat from under a clump of mangrove trees. We jumped in and shoved off in a hurry, for Ortega and several of his men had just appeared on the bluff above us and were making for us. There were no oars in the boat but we pulled a board loose from the bottom and used it as a paddle. A strong current from the east swept us clear of the peninsula and out to sea; but I was not alarmed, for I figured that we would soon be in the path of coasting vessels. Scattered rifle patter reached us for a long time, indicating that my former comrades-in-arms were being

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ignominiously chased around in a way that must have been most discouraging to Pulgar. Toward the middle of the afternoon, as we were trying to work in toward the land, the Indian let our paddle get away from him, which left us entirely at the mercy of the elements, and I suspected that we might have fared better if we had stayed on shore.

We drifted around for three days and nights without so much as a glimpse of a distant sail, and without an ounce of food or a mouthful of water, save only such as we were able to suck out of our clothes during and after a providential rain that fell on the second night. On the morning of the fourth day a fog lifted and close to us was a fleet of fishermen from the island of Oruba, twenty miles to the westward of Curacoa. They took us to their island and after we had rested and eaten for two days a fishing boat took us to Curacoa. There I learned from Consul Faxon what had happened in Venezuela. Guzman's plans had worked out more rapidly than he anticipated when he sent me to New York for arms, and he landed in Venezuela early in February at the head of a small force but with a large army waiting for him. The old Liberals flocked to his standard and with only slight resistance he entered Caracas and proclaimed himself Dictator. His victory

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was so easily achieved and was so largely a personal one that he did not give to Pulgar the reward to which that general considered himself entitled, and the latter immediately started a new revolution.

When I told Faxon the manner in which I had been imposed on and how I had been impressed into Pulgar's service, he advised me to go to Caracas at once and tell President Guzman the whole story. Though somewhat dubious as to the result, because of the fear that Guzman would be skeptical, and perhaps brutal, I followed his advice and went on the next steamer. The same ship carried a letter to Guzman from Faxon in which he told him of my experiences and of the precautions I had taken to verify the signature to the order Ortega had given me on my arrival with the arms. From the effect which this letter produced I judge that Faxon also said some very complimentary things about me, but I never had an opportunity to thank him, for he died before I was in Curacao again.

I called on Guzman after I knew he had received Faxon's letter, and was welcomed with marked cordiality. "Tell me your whole story," he said, "but let me assure you, it is believed before it is told." His face took on an ugly look when I told him how Ortega had tricked me with the forged order and he

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interrupted me to say that he had sent an officer to Curacoa to await the "Juliette" and direct me to deliver the arms at La Guaira. This officer's failure to get to me in advance of Ortega had not been satisfactorily explained and had, Guzman said, been severely punished. It was evident that he suspected collusion between his agent and Ortega.

When I had finished Guzman told me he was surrounded by men whom he either suspected or hesitated to trust. He wanted a man whom he could rely on implicitly to watch for evidences of treachery among those around him, and he was kind enough to say he thought me the man for whom he had been looking. He asked me to remain in Caracas for an indefinite time, to mix freely with his *entourage* and become intimately acquainted with them and ascertain who could be trusted and who were doubtful. I could pose as an American who was studying the country with the idea of making investments, which would explain my interest in things and my desire to cultivate the members of his court. I spoke Spanish well and could also converse easily enough in French, though that language was little used except among the diplomats.

I accepted his invitation gladly and a part of the time that I was in Caracas I spent at the Yellow

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House, the residence of the President, as his guest. Guzman was the handsomest man I have ever known; tall and as straight as a sword, with long black beard and dark eyes, sharp as needles, that could flash fire or friendship. He was magnetic and winning to the last degree and every inch a ruler of men, without the faintest notion as to what fear meant. During the nearly twenty years that he was absolute ruler of Venezuela his temper was the thing most dreaded through all the land. I have seen grizzled generals, descended from the best families of old Spain, turn almost white at the sign of his anger.

Himself a pure Castiliano, he regarded the native Venezuelanos as a vastly inferior race, thereby furnishing another illustration of his good judgment, and there was much of contempt in his attitude toward them. Many times, when they had incurred his displeasure by a display of cowardice or some other fault, I have heard him abuse a quailing crowd of the highest officers in the Venezuelan Army in language much more vigorous and profane than an American policeman would use to a gang of hoodlums. "You are not worth a damn," he would always tell them in conclusion, "except in proportion to the amount of foreign blood that is in you." Yet until the day when he was treacherously overthrown, to

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the great loss of Venezuela, no criticism of his was ever resented nor was there ever a whisper of protest. The people knew their master.

One of the first whom Guzman asked me closely to observe was a young Indian officer named Joachim Crespo, an aide attached to his household. I reported that he could be implicitly trusted, and knowledge of that fact helped me out of a scrape years later, when Crespo was President of Venezuela.

Not more than ten days after my arrival in Caracas Guzman asked me to be in his private *sala* at ten o'clock the next morning, to meet an old friend. At the appointed hour the Governor of the Casa Publica came in, with a few officers, escorting none other than Gen. Vicente Pulgar, who had put to his service my cargo of arms. Pulgar was in full uniform and bore himself like a hero. His manner was almost contemptuous and his expression was one of amused curiosity rather than fear.

Guzman made him a courtly bow and extended his hand, which Pulgar reluctantly accepted.

"This is an unexpected pleasure," Guzman said.

"I dare say it is to you, General, but here I am, at your service."

"I hope you are here as a friend."

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"Whatever General Guzman desires must necessarily be accepted as an accomplished fact."

Guzman turned to the Governor and asked him the occasion for the call. The Governor replied that they had brought General Pulgar as a prisoner of war.

"Prisoner!" exclaimed Guzman with profound astonishment. "My friend General Pulgar a prisoner! If that is the purpose of your visit you may retire."

After the officers had departed Guzman turned to Pulgar with a more serious air. "You will be my guest in Caracas until such time as I need you elsewhere," he said. "I will be pleased to receive a call from you every day."

Pulgar bowed; no other parole was necessary.

That was Guzman's way of doing things and it was well understood, especially by men of intellect like Pulgar. No firmer hand than Guzman's ever ruled but it was ordinarily encased in a velvet glove. His bare hand, which was displayed only when extreme conditions demanded, was a sign of terror.

As Pulgar was leaving he stopped and congratulated me on my safe trip to Caracas. I thanked him, with the same politeness. Neither of us alluded to his seizure of my arms or to my enforced service

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with him. Pulgar and I subsequently became good friends.

I congratulated Guzman on his diplomacy and his shrewd effort to turn a powerful enemy into a useful friend, though I doubted if he would succeed.

"If I and my good adviser, Captain Boynton, cannot pull the claws of the General, we will have to take the consequences," he said. From that I understood that I was to keep close watch of Pulgar and report daily, which I did. Everything that I saw and heard indicated that Guzman's diplomacy would fail. Pulgar told his friends openly that while Guzman seemed very friendly he was not deceived and would kill him at the first opportunity. "Well, he'll have plenty of opportunity," said Guzman with a laugh when I reported this to him.

There was a reception at the Yellow House a few nights later. Pulgar was invited and was present. Guzman soon found an opportunity to engage him in conversation. "I have already found that being President of Venezuela has its objectionable features," sighed Guzman after they had chatted lightly for a few minutes. "One has to listen to so many ridiculous tales. For instance, I have heard many foolish stories about you, one of them

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being an alleged threat to kill me the first time you have a chance."

"I don't know about the others, but I did say that," replied Pulgar.

Guzman shrugged his shoulders, as though wearied. "How often," he responded, "we say we are going to do things which we may think we will do but which we never do do."

"When I get an opportunity that a gentleman can take advantage of, I intend to kill you, General Guzman," said Pulgar, still smiling.

"Let that be the understanding then," answered Guzman as he walked away, without displaying the slightest concern.

The very next day Guzman sent Pulgar an invitation to come to the palace at three o'clock and go driving with him. Contrary to his custom he ordered that no guards accompany them. They had not gone a quarter of a mile when one of the front wheels came off and both of them were thrown out in a heap. As they disentangled themselves Pulgar drew a revolver but it was not well out of his pocket before Guzman had him covered with his pistol.

"Ah, you were prepared for me, I see, General," said Pulgar.

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"I am always prepared for friends and enemies alike," replied Guzman.

They put up their weapons and walked back to the palace.

"I am sorry our ride was so short," said Guzman.

"It was long enough," was Pulgar's reply, "to convert an enemy into a friend."

"In that case it has been truly delightful," responded Guzman. They shook hands and that was the end of the Pulgar revolution.

Peace palled on Pulgar and he died not long afterward. As was his right he had the largest funeral ever seen in Venezuela. Without exception he was the bravest man I have ever known. He had all of Frank Norton's daring and added to it what seemed to be a foolhardy recklessness that times without number carried him right up against old Graybeard's scythe, yet he always knew the chances he was taking and coolly calculated them. When he was stripped he looked as though he had been run through a threshing machine. From head to foot he was covered with scars left by knives, swords, and bullets of all sizes. In an assault on the fortress at Porto Cabello, years before I knew him, he climbed into an embrasure and over the mouth of a cannon just as it was fired. Had he been a second later he would have

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been blown to pieces. The explosion burned nearly all the flesh off his legs and reduced them to pipe-stems. He was a tall, handsome man of pure Castilian blood; a revolutionist by birth, breeding, education, and occupation, and his one ambition was to be President of Venezuela. I doubt if that country will ever produce another just like him.

It was known that Guzman favored the introduction of foreign capital to develop the wonderful resources of Venezuela, the full extent of which is not even yet understood, and Caracas was soon overrun with concession hunters. Many of them sought my support and offered me all sorts of inducements, but I told all of them that I had no influence with Guzman and would not use it if I had, in such ways as they desired. I always advised Guzman fully as to whom the concession hunters were and what they wanted. One of those on whom I thus reported was Cyrenius Fitzgerald, an American civil engineer, who sought a concession covering the delta of the Orinoco and a considerable distance up the river, which section then was an unknown land. Guzman wanted a report on it and asked me to visit it, which I did, in company with Fitzgerald and an English engineer named Tucker, who was there making a survey for the railroad which subsequently was built between

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Caracas and La Guaira. We made the trip on the old government boat "Bolivar," being away two months and going up the Orinoco as far as Ciudad Bolivar. We went over much of the territory included in the proposed concession and explored many uncharted passages in the delta of the river which had long been safe havens for revolutionists and smugglers. I became enchanted with the country, which was rich in minerals and valuable woods. In reporting to Guzman and talking with him about the project, I found that he was to receive a large block of stock in the enterprise. This concession finally was granted by Guzman in 1883, without any solicitation from me, and thirteen years later it was decreed by fate that I should become manager of the property for the Orinoco Company, Limited, which is now known as the Orinoco Corporation.

CHAPTER V

THE MAROONING OF A TRAITOR

I HAD been with Guzman Blanco for about a year after he proclaimed himself Dictator of Venezuela, on February 14, 1871, when I began to grow restless again. This was in no sense due to any fault I had to find with Guzman. He had treated me with every mark of friendship and had proved, time and again, that I possessed his entire confidence. He had paid me fifty thousand dollars for the cargo of arms which Pulgar secured through Ortega's forgery and had been liberal in other financial matters, though I would not accept any direct payment for my confidential services, as I considered myself, in a sense, his guest. But, under the strong hand of Guzman, things were settling down to a humdrum, and I rebelled against peace and order and fretted under the restraint of the land. At sea I could go where I pleased, when I pleased, and do what I pleased; on shore, except for the Yellow House and the evening social events, all of which were alike, my time was largely divided between Madam Santa Amand's hotel in Caracas and the old Posada Neptuno in La Guaira, and my move-

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ments were circumscribed by the part I was playing. Then, too, revolutions were popping in Central America, according to the reports that reached Caracas, and I felt that I was missing a lot of excitement and some business. This latter consideration entered into my thoughts not largely, and at all only because my expenses were greatly in excess of the amounts I received from Guzman in roundabout ways. In those days and for years afterward, I gratified my foolishly extravagant tastes without any regard to the cost of things; it is only within recent years that I have come to understand that money has a value.

With my whole nature clamoring for a change to more strenuous scenes I put the situation up to Guzman and secured his permission to go away, on the promise that I would return within six months. I summoned the "Juliette" from Curacoa and set sail for England, for the double purpose of securing a cargo of arms, with which to add to the joy of living in Central America, and looking up Frank Norton, who had so well planted within me the germ of his China Sea insanity that it was taking root. With the good little ship heeled over to the steady trade winds that fanned my dusky cheek, lovingly as I fancied in my enthusiasm, and with the waters that are nowhere else so blue murmuring a welcome back

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to them, I was again a rover of the sea and my exultant soul joined in the lyric chorus of the rigging.

We stopped at St. Thomas, that haven of thieves, blacklegs, and revolutionists, and there I met General Baez, brother of Buenaventura Baez, President of Santo Domingo, and his Minister of War. Buenaventura Baez was one of the most interesting characters the romantic West Indies have produced. He was the son of a rich mulatto and was born early in the last century. He coöperated with General Santana in establishing the independence of Santo Domingo and was President from 1849 to 1853, when he was supplanted by Santana, who expelled him from the island. Santana was deposed three years later and Baez, who had spent the interval in New York, resumed the presidency. Two years later he was once more ousted by Santana and forced to live abroad until 1865, when he again assumed the presidency. In 1866 General Pimental headed a successful revolt in favor of General Cabral, and Baez was banished a third time, going to St. Thomas. His star was in eclipse only a short while, however, for the following year he again fought his way to the presidential chair. In the latter part of 1869 he signed two treaties with President Grant, one for the cession of Samana Bay, which probably is the most beautiful

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harbor in the West Indies and was wanted by our Navy Department for years before these treaties were signed and for many years afterward, and the other for the annexation of the whole island of Santo Domingo to the United States. The people of Santo Domingo approved both of these conventions at an election decreed by Baez in February, 1870, and held under the guns of an American warship, but the United States Senate refused to ratify either treaty. President Grant believed strongly in this annexation, wherein he showed his farsightedness, and a commission which he sent to the island reported, in the Spring of 1871, in favor of the treaty; but sentiment in the Senate was decidedly against it and the measure was not pressed.

If Grant could have lived until to-day he would find considerable satisfaction in the protectorate the United States has assumed over Santo Domingo, which really amounts to American control. The same course must be taken with helpless Hayti, and it may well be that before these lines are read the administration of the finances of the "Black Republic" will have been taken over by American officers; and the American minister, acting under orders from Washington, will be the real ruler of the land, as he is in Santo Domingo. Let me digress here to express

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the conviction that within ten years every European possession in the West Indies, with the possible exception of Barbadoes, will come under the Stars and Stripes. Even if economic conditions do not compel this change, as they would do sooner or later, it will be made necessary by the completion of the Panama Canal. The United States, though seldom given to any riotous display of good sense, is still too wise a nation to permit a foreign power to have a naval base almost within gunshot of Colon, from which it could strike a quick and destructive blow at the inter-oceanic waterway.

Conditions are ripe for the change. England has made a failure of governing her islands and, in advance of formal retirement, has abandoned her great naval station at Saint Lucia, on which millions of pounds were spent, and withdrawn her warships from the Caribbean. The Danish Islands are a heavy and continuous drain on the Copenhagen treasury that cannot be maintained for many years longer, and Washington years ago, through clear-visioned John Hay, served formal notice on Denmark that the sale of these islands to any nation except the United States would be regarded as an unfriendly act. It was the determination then to keep these islands away from the outstretched hands of Germany, be-

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cause of their proximity to South America, and there are many more reasons now to prevent their transfer to any foreign power. They are so largely owned by Americans that they are practically American colonies to-day. The French Islands are the most prosperous of all, but only because of a bounty on sugar which the national government is anxious to drop. Holland has no reason for retaining her islands, which are an expense to which no glory attaches. Under American ownership these beauty spots would be restored to their old-time prosperity and no one knows this so well as the islanders themselves. In my judgment it is a matter of only a comparatively few years until England, France, Denmark, and the Netherlands will enter into some arrangement, the details of which I do not attempt to predict, by which all of their Caribbean islands will be turned over to the United States. The only possible exception is Barbadoes, which England may wish to retain as a midway station on her commercial highway to South America, but as that poverty-stricken islet, which has twice disappeared under the sea and then bobbed up again, has no port that could be defended, there might be no objection to such a plan. Cuba is certain to become an American possession, for the Cubans are as incapable of self-gov-

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ernment as are the Filipinos, and if Santo Domingo and Hayti are not recognized as children of the United States, they will be its wards. The United States, too, must take a larger hand in the affairs of Central America and Venezuela. The Monroe Doctrine cannot run on one wheel. At the same time that it protects the Latin-American countries from European aggression, it must compel them to pay their debts and maintain order. I am glad, however, that this theory did not obtain in the old days, for it would have robbed me of many exciting episodes.

The defeat of Grant's annexation project gave Pimental and Cabral an excuse for starting a new revolution, and they were beginning to show their hand when I ran into General Baez at St. Thomas. He knew of my association with Guzman Blanco and at once approached me with a proposition to go to Santo Domingo to aid his brother in the troubles he foresaw. He also suggested that I might undertake a mission to America or Europe in relation to the readjustment of the debts of the island, which even then were becoming burdensome and a source of much anxiety to the party in power, because of the insistent belief of the creditors that they were entitled to their money when it was due. I told him I knew nothing at all about finances but that, if I could

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get an extension of leave from Guzman, I would consider any practical plan that promised excitement. He said he would consult with his brother and write me at Caracas.

We went on to London, where I learned that Norton was in the Mediterranean with the "Leckwith," impatiently carrying general cargoes. I left word for him with Nickell & Son that I expected soon to be ready to go out East with him, took on a cargo of arms and headed for Costa Rica, where I had information that a revolution was hatching against Gen. Tomaso Guardia, who had recently come into power. For this trip, I remember, I took the name of "Captain John F. Kinnear." We had some trouble in getting away, for the British Government was still dead set against filibustering, and in the hope of removing all suspicion I gave our destination as Kingston, Jamaica, though I had no idea of stopping there. I gave the ship a new set of papers, showing British registry, and was, of course, flying the British flag.

We ran into bad weather in the Caribbean and were forced, after all, to put in at Kingston, leaking badly. The ship was so opened up, in fact, that she had to be recalked and have a few new planks, which necessitated putting her in dry dock. The port regulations stipulated that when a ship went in dry

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dock a general cargo could be left in her, at the option and risk of the owner, but that all explosives and munitions of war must be taken out and stored in the government arsenal, or in some place selected by the commandant. There was nothing for it but to take out our cargo, and five days were consumed in loading and repairing the ship. I had the work hurried with all possible speed, for the mail ship from England was due in nine days after our arrival and I was fearful that she would bring an order for our detention, which, as a matter of fact, she did, as I learned years afterward. When the repairs were completed the governor of the island refused to allow us to reload our cargo, as he had an intimation that the ship was not what she pretended to be. This hint, it developed later, came from Jimmy Donovan, a "sea lawyer" whom I had shipped at the last minute in the hurry of getting away from London. He made what is known on the sea as a "pier-head jump." On the fourth day I prevailed on the governor to allow us to take on our cargo, but he insisted that the ship must be held, with both anchors down, until further orders. I decided that we would go out that night and so informed Lorensen, the sailing master. Knowing me even as well as he did he laughed incredulously, thinking I was joking, for the channel

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through the harbor was shaped like the letter "S" and commanded by a fort which could, as he said, blow us out of the water without half trying.

"Just the same," I said, "we are going to sea or to hell to-night."

"All right, Captain, but it will be to hell, if I am any judge," was the quiet reply of the game Lorensen, than whom a braver or better seaman never walked a deck. During the evening he greased all of the blocks so we could start on our problematical journey without any noise. The moon went down at midnight and before it was out of sight we had one anchor up, with a muffled capstan. We were getting up the other when the harbor policeman came along. A few Bank of England notes blinded him and we got under way, with two of the ship's boats towing us and the tide helping us along. Evidently the fort had orders to look out for us but we caught them napping, apparently, for we were almost past it when we were hailed and ordered to stop. In a minute, without giving us a decent chance to heave to, even had we been so inclined, they whanged away at us. The second shot went clear through us, just below the waterway, and Lorensen, who was with me at the wheel, exclaimed grimly, "Here we go, Captain."

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But he was mistaken, for in the darkness their gunnery was not up to the standard of British marksmanship, for which I have a wholesome respect. They kept at it hard enough but all of their shots went wild, except for one that punched a hole in the port bulwarks forward, though from the way the shells whistled I have no doubt our canvas would have been punctured many times, had it been up. We were soon under cover of the Myrtle Bank Hotel and after that two ships protected us until we were far enough away so that only a chance shot could reach us. When we were well enough out in the harbor so that we could manœuvre and get the full effect of the light breeze that was blowing over the salt flats, we set all of our sails and pulled away.

At daylight I had the carpenter at work fixing up the little damage the fort had done us, and it was well that we were quick about it for during the afternoon we met the old warship "Bellerephon," which was attached to that station, coming in from a trip around the island ten days ahead of time. We were preparing to salute her when she stopped and hove us to with a blank shot. I don't think I have ever been more surprised, for there was no wireless telegraph in those days and I could not conceive how she had gotten word that we were suspected of filibus-

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tering. While I was racking my brain for some solution of the problem Lorensen ran forward, leaned out over the side, and came back and reported that there was a blue shirt under the bobstay. That explained it, for in those days it was an unwritten law in the British Navy that when a sailor on a merchant ship had any pronounced complaint to make, regarding either his own treatment or general conditions on the vessel, he would hang a shirt in the chains, under the bowsprit, where it would not be seen by the officers unless they were looking for it, as a signal to any warship they met that there was something wrong on board. Whenever and wherever a warship saw a shirt fluttering under the bobstay the vessel was held up and carefully investigated.

I suspected at once that it was Jimmy Donovan who had hung out the shirt, and I had him bucked and gagged and stowed away in the hold before he could have said "Jack Robinson." Then, quickly, I made an entry on the log which showed that he had been left in the hospital at Kingston, with pernicious fever. By that time the lieutenant from the "Bellerophon" was alongside. When he came aboard I assumed a look of injured innocence and profound surprise. He ordered me to muster the crew aft and called for my papers. To my great satisfaction he

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merely glanced at the certificate of registry, which was forged, and centred his attention on the crew list. The men answered to their names as he called them off. When he came to Donovan I explained that he had been taken sick at Kingston and left there, and produced the log, which satisfied him.

"Who among you has any complaint to make?" he asked of the men. There was no response, and he repeated the question.

"Don't be afraid," he encouraged them. "The 'Bellerephon' will protect you. If you have any complaint to make, step out and make it. We will see that you get fair play and, if necessary, take you on board."

No one moved, and after waiting some time the lieutenant turned to me with the remark that everything seemed to be all right. I told him I had heard of no complaints from any of the men and asked why they had "stood us up."

"Why, there is a shirt out forward," he explained. I suggested that perhaps some of the crew had been washing. Hearing my remark a quick-witted fellow named Bill Johnson, who had shipped on my first trip with the "Juliette," stepped out and said he had washed his shirt that morning and hung it in the chains to dry, without knowing that it meant any-

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thing. "I've been a sailor for a good many years but that is one signal I never heard of before," he said.

"Is that true, Bill?" asked the lieutenant with what seemed like just a shade of suspicion.

"It is, sir," replied Bill with the steady gaze of an honest man.

"He is a 'True Bill' all right," I told the young officer as I shot a grateful look at the grizzled sailor that meant a raise in wages. "He is the oldest man on the ship and one of the best. That shirt signal is a new one on me, too, and I thought I knew all the signs of the sea."

"Very good, sir," he replied. "It is quite evidently a mistake."

He then returned to the "Bellerephon," which answered our salute, and we squared away for Costa Rica. My mind was free from any further fear of capture, for a stiff breeze was singing over our quarter, and I knew by the time the old warship could get to Kingston and start after us again we would be well out of reach. As soon as she was hull down I mustered the crew aft and complimented Bill on his ready wit and rewarded it. He was with me for years after that and was never known by any other name than "True Bill."

I then reminded the men that, in accordance with

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my invariable rule when running contraband, I had told all of them the exact nature of our voyage before we were out of sight of land and had offered to set ashore any who did not wish to undertake it, while those who stayed with me were to receive double pay, and a bonus out of the profits in addition, in consideration of the hazardous nature of the trip.

"Therefore," I told them, "the treachery of Donovan has not only endangered your extra pay and bonus but also placed your freedom in jeopardy. As he was one of your number I will turn him over to you for such punishment as you think his case deserves. I, of course, reserve the right to review your verdict, but I do not believe you will be too lenient with him." The crew welcomed this announcement with cheers, which could not be regarded as a good omen for the traitor, and a court-martial was organized, with the "bos'n" at the head of it.

Donovan confessed when he was brought before the court, whereupon it was unanimously and speedily decided that he should run the gantlet and be marooned, which verdict I approved, for I believed it to be none too severe. The crew prepared for the first ceremony by knotting a lot of rope ends and tarring them until they were as hard as iron but flexible. They then formed in a double line the

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full length of the ship and as Donovan ran down the middle of it they laid on so well that he was leaving a trail of blood before he tumbled in a heap at the end. He was then placed in the brig and kept there until we came to a small island off the Costa Rican coast, on which he was landed with enough water and provisions to last him a couple of weeks or more and a flag that he could use to signal any vessel coming his way. There was not a great deal of travel down that way in those days and he may still be there, doing a repetition of the Robinson Crusoe act, though the island was not very large and the boat's crew that landed him reported that they saw no goats. Donovan was helpless from fear when he was lowered into the boat to be rowed to the island, and begged for mercy, but that was something our cargo did not contain.

The arms we carried were sold to the revolutionists in Costa Rica, being paid for partly in cash and partly in coffee, which I sold at Curacoa. From there I returned to Venezuela and reported to Guzman Blanco, after having been away only about four months. Not long after my arrival in Caracas, where I resumed my old position as confidential agent for Guzman, I received a letter from President Baez asking me to enter his employ, to reorganize his army

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and aid him in suppressing the revolutionary feeling which was being developed by agents for Pimental and Cabral. He offered to give me a commission as General in the Santo Domingan Army, which he did do later, and to pay me liberally for my services, which he didn't do. I replied that I had again associated myself with Guzman and that while no length of service had been specified, I wished to remain with him at least a short while, after which I would try to get leave to join the Santo Domingans.

Guzman was paving the way for his election as Constitutional President, which was accomplished the next year, 1873, and all of his friends were working to that end. He was supported by a public sentiment that became practically unanimous, but there were a few who were unalterably opposed to any established order of things and who could not get over the habit of "revoluting," with or without provocation. During the Fall and Winter these discontented ones gradually drew together under the leadership of General Pulido. Guzman was kept advised as to what they were doing but their following was so small that it caused him no uneasiness and, to further strengthen himself with the people, he determined to take no steps against them until they came out in the open, when he was prepared to crush them. The moment

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the rebels raised their banners Guzman took the field against them, in person. At the head of an army of four thousand veterans he marched to Valencia where he met Pulido and routed him, following up his scattered forces and almost annihilating them, and the revolt was stamped out with one smashing blow. That was the last hand raised against Guzman for seventeen years; during all of that time he was the absolute dictator of Venezuela. The constitution prohibited the President from succeeding himself so he occupied that office for alternate terms, with an obedient dummy serving in the intervals, which he spent in Europe as Minister Plenipotentiary, directing the government by mail. His rule was wise and progressive. Railroads were built, roads improved, schools established, and real religious liberty took the place of clericalism. He was betrayed, in the end, by his supposed friends, men whom he had raised to prominence and prosperity. Had he been succeeded by a man as strong and able as himself Venezuela would to-day be the foremost country in South America, instead of the one most uncivilized.

Not long after the campaign against Pulido, in which I served on Guzman's staff, I received another letter from Baez, urging me to come to Santo Domingo. The same mail brought a letter from Baez

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to Guzman, asking him to grant me leave of absence for a few months to enter his service. Guzman was flattered by this request and with his permission I went to Santo Domingo City in the Spring of 1873, on the "Juliette."

CHAPTER VI

A SWIFT VENGEANCE

PRESIDENT BAEZ of Santo Domingo was short and thin and had a washed-out look, as though his skin had been faded by chemicals instead of by a three-quarters' admixture of white blood. He had large full eyes that were shifty and insincere. He was clever but superficial, cunning and treacherous. Had I seen him before I went to his cursed country, to reorganize his army and aid in putting down the growing revolutionary sentiment, I would have remained in Venezuela or gone elsewhere in search of adventure, for he looked a coward and provoked distrust. I had heard of him only as a good fighter but that reputation, I became convinced soon after my first visit to the "palace," had been earned for him by his former friends and supporters and was in no sense the work of his own sword, at least so far as recent years were concerned. In his earlier days he might have displayed more bravery, and he must have shown some courage to arouse a fighting degree of loyalty that had four times swept the country, but presuming that to be true he had gone back greatly

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with advancing age. He seemed to have convinced the superstitious mulattoes, with whom the still more fanatical full-blooded blacks were always at war, that he was a real man of destiny whose course could not safely be interfered with, and his successive successes probably were due more to that belief than to any other cause. His brother, the Minister of War, had all of the President's faults in accentuated form and added to them an inordinate vanity. He was jealous of me from the start. He had expected that I would recommend to him such changes in the "military establishment" as I thought wise, but I insisted on doing things myself and having a free hand, which the President was quite willing to give me, perhaps because he was suspicious of even his own brother.

The "army" was, in reality, not much more than an unorganized body of densely ignorant natives who, as practically the only compensation for their supposed loyalty, were allowed to carry guns, which they did not know how to use. I taught them how to march without getting in each other's way, how to handle their arms without shooting themselves, and as much discipline as they were amenable to, but I fear my efforts did not go much beyond that even though they did effect a decided improvement. One

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of my first recommendations to the President was that he buy and fit out two small gunboats with which to patrol the coast and hold in check such revolutionary centres as Monte Cristi, under threat of bombardment. They could also be used, as I pointed out, to transport troops quickly to rebelliously inclined districts. The President thought well of the plan and, though I advised steamers, he directed that the "Juliette," for which he agreed to pay a fair price, be converted into such a craft. I ordered five small rapid-fire guns sent from England to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and, the revolutionary spirit seemingly having subsided with the improvement in the army, took the "Juliette" there in the Summer of 1873, to have her decks strengthened and mount the cannon. We returned early in the Fall to find that the smouldering revolution had burst into a flame and a large force was marching on Santo Domingo City, and only a few miles away. When I reached the palace the President and his brother were vehemently but vainly advising each other to be brave.

"What shall we do — what shall we do?" demanded the President as I entered the door.

"It strikes me that it might be a good scheme to fight," I replied, with no attempt to conceal my disgust at their attitude. "In fact, I should say it is up

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to us to fight, and fight until we are all bloody, if we have to."

"Yes, yes, but where?" queried the trembling chief executive.

"Go out and meet them," I advised. "They probably will not be looking for us, as I judge that would be a departure from the established Santo Domingan method of warfare, and we may be able to take them at a disadvantage."

"No, no," urged the panic-stricken Minister of War, "let us wait until they get into the city and then bombard them with your guns."

"Which would mean," I said, "killing four or five of your own people to every one of the enemy. I am not used to that way of fighting and don't know how to do it."

They told me there were about three thousand men in the attacking force. We had more than four thousand men under arms, which gave us the advantage of numbers. The city had no defences worthy the name and I insisted that the thing to do was to go outside and fight it out in the open, while the doughty General, who seemed to be seeking delay more than anything else, was in favor of making a rough-and-tumble of it in the town. The President, who had imbibed something of American ideas during his

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three years' residence in New York, and who had apparently regained a little of his nerve while we were canvassing the situation, agreed with me, and, against the continued objections of his brother, we went out to meet the attacking army.

Gen. Baez commanded our centre and right while I commanded our left flank. His reason for wanting to postpone the action was quickly apparent, for he was an arrant coward. He began to give way, before a force that was inferior in both numbers and discipline, with the firing of the first gun, and fell back so rapidly that before I realized it my command was flanked and almost cut off, with the sea on one side of us and the enemy on two others and rapidly closing up the fourth. My men fought surprisingly well until they suddenly discovered that they were almost surrounded, when they promptly went into a panic. Most of them dropped their guns and ran for the city, with an activity of which I had not dreamed them capable, while nearly all of the others, in regular South American fashion, about-faced and joined the rebels on the spot. In a few minutes I was captured, along with about a hundred men who were so numbed by fear that they could neither run nor fight, and had not enough discretion to join the enemy. I was furious over the cowardice of Baez and put up

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the hardest fight I was capable of, with the satisfaction of putting six or eight blacks on a permanent peace basis, but with my revolver empty and my sword broken I was overwhelmed by the inky cloud. Gen. Baez galloped back to the city and he and his bewildered brother, the President, had barely time to board a small schooner and sail for Curacoa before the capital was in the hands of the rebels. Gen. Ganier d'Aton, a tool of Pimental and Cabral, was at once proclaimed President, and hailed by the populace with the customary acclaim.

Instead of being killed at once, as I had expected to be, I was taken to a small fort on a hill near the town where, on the trumped-up and altogether false charge that I had fomented trouble and brought on civil war, I was tried by drum-head court-martial and sentenced to be shot at sunrise. The verdict was, of course, dictated by revenge, and execution of it was delayed because they wished to gloat over me for a while. This was a little the most serious predicament I had ever been in and, with the idea of taking every chance that was open to me rather than with any distinct hope that it would be answered, I gave the grand hailing sign of a powerful secret order which I had joined while in Caracas. I thought I saw a sergeant raise his eyes but, as he gave no further sign, I con-

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cluded that if there had been any movement it had been one of surprise and not of recognition. I was placed in a large *sala* with windows opening on the courtyard and blank walls on the other three sides. The windows were barred and after satisfying myself that they were secure, and that there was no way of escape, I laid down and smoked, reflecting that if my time had come there was no way of interfering with the programme scheduled for the break of day. The soldiers were drinking and celebrating their victory with shouts and songs, which lessened in volume and vehemence as the night wore on, but two sentries who paced back and forth in front of my room and met under one of the windows religiously kept sober. Now and then a drunken coterie would press their dirty faces against the bars to hurl at me denunciatory bursts of Spanish eloquence, to which I vigorously replied, but these enlivening visits grew less and less frequent, as the consumption of *tafia* rum increased.

Along about three o'clock, just as I had about made up my mind that in a couple of hours I would be due to start on an indefinite exploration into regions about which nothing is known except that no traveller ever returns from them, I heard a short scuffle at each end of the path the sentries were patrolling and a gurgling noise as though a man was

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choking. The next moment Lorensen's voice came softly through the door, "Are you in there, Captain?" I assured him that I was.

"Stand away from the door," he said, and I obeyed the order with pleasurable alacrity. Three blows with a log of crutch mahogany taken from a pile in the courtyard which had been brought in from the mountains for export, smashed in the door. Lorensen seized my arm and, led by the sergeant who had, after all, recognized the sign I had made and answered it, we climbed down a declivity back of the fort and made our way to the shore, where two boats were waiting for us. The smashing in of the door of my prison aroused the drowsy guard and we were hardly well out of the fort before there was a beating of drums and loud shouts from the few half sober officers, directed at the soundly sleeping soldiers. They finally mustered a detachment which was sent in pursuit of us, but they were not in a condition to move rapidly and did not reach the shore until we were a considerable distance away from it. They fired a few shots in the general direction of the sea but as we were in no danger of being hit we did not raise a gun.

When we got out to the "Juliette" I heard the story of my deliverance. I had been taken prisoner about

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the middle of the afternoon and it was early in the evening when the death sentence was passed on me. The sergeant, whose name was Alexandro, had understood my signal. He went into the city as soon as he could get away from the fort and, by persistent questioning of the natives, finally ascertained that I was in command of the American ship lying in the harbor, — for I had not hoisted the Santo Domingan flag on the “Juliette.” He then rowed out to the ship and, after telling Lorensen what had happened, through a member of the crew who could speak Spanish, offered to lead a rescuing party to the place where I was confined. He said it would be comparatively easy to get me away as only a small body of troops had been left at the fort, the supply of rum in the city being much larger, and they would be helpless from drink.

Lorensen, being a member of the same order, could well understand why a white man should have taken the deep personal interest in my welfare which Alexandro manifested, but he was suspicious that the negro was seeking to lead him into a trap. He decided, however, to take no chances, so, after warning Alexandro that he would be the first man killed if he attempted any treachery, Lorensen went ashore with sixteen well armed men, six of whom were left with the boats while the others proceeded to the old fort.

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They surprised the two sentries at the opposite ends of their beat, throttled them and, as the surest means of preventing an outcry, cut their throats, which accounted for the gurgling noise I had heard. Then they broke in the door of the *sala*, in which operation they were obliged to make enough noise to arouse the guard.

Such are the obligations of a great secret order.

Men whom I sent ashore reported that President Baez and his brother had fled and the rebels were in full control of the government, and as soon as it was day I sailed close in and bombarded the fort where my execution was to have taken place. There was a great helter-skeltering of rum-soaked braves when the first shells exploded around their ears, but there were some who did not get away, and the crumbling walls came down and buried them. Then we headed for Venezuela again, after an experience that paid me only in excitement. I had not drawn a dollar from Baez and I had been obliged to pay for the changes made in the "Juliette" and for the guns that were brought from England, for I could not find a banker in Halifax who would advance a cent on the letter of credit from the great Republic of Santo Domingo. Still, I figured that the experience had furnished me enough excitement to justify its cost. Several years

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later I met Gen. Baez again in Murphy's Hotel at St. Thomas but did not see him until he took a good-natured shot at me. The bullet smashed a pile of dishes on the arm of a waiter ten feet away from me, and from the start that waiter made I would not be surprised to hear that he is running yet around the hills back of Charlotte Amalia.

At Caracas I found that Guzman had been duly elected Constitutional President. He was inaugurating a scheme of public improvements, the country had settled down to business, and the prospect was all for long continued peace, which was displeasing to me and I wanted to get away again. However, Guzman had a plan to keep me busy. There was not then, nor is there now for that matter, a decent map of Venezuela. It was reported from Paris that a Frenchman had gone up the Orinoco to its headwaters and had found that the Casiquiare River, which empties into it, formed a natural canal connecting with the Rio Negro, which runs into the Amazon at Manaos, Brazil. Guzman proposed that I go over this route and seek to verify the Frenchman's report. Exploring unknown lands has always been as much a passion with me as aiding and abetting revolutions, and I willingly accepted the commission, but, though I did not tell Guzman so, I had

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no intention of returning to Caracas. As an evidence of my appreciation of his friendship I gave him a Jurgensen watch, which I had had made to order, and the "Juliette," just as she stood, sending Lorenson and one or two others to London to work under the direction of my agents until I should arrive. He used the good little ship for years as a mail boat between La Guaira and Curacoa. Guzman gave me a Damascus sword of exquisite workmanship, which, not long afterward, I used with good effect on the pirates of the China Sea.

He wanted the exploration made on a grand scale and suggested that he send along a detachment of soldiers. I convinced him that his plan was impracticable, for a small party could get through much more easily than a large one. Late in October I went to Trinidad to outfit for the trip. There, at the old Ice House Hotel, I met two young Britishers who were men after my own heart: Dr. Rogers, a rich Church of England clergyman who preferred the legitimate pleasures of this world to the prospects of the next, and Frank Anderson, son of a wealthy Glasgow merchant and a recent graduate of Edinburgh University. They had come out to hunt for big game and were outfitting for a trip up the Orinoco. When I told them where I was going they

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expressed a great desire to accompany me and I readily agreed. I was glad to have such good companions for the long and probably dangerous journey, for it was a tradition that there were many "bad Indians" far up the river. I was the commandant of the party, Rogers was the scientist, and Anderson the provider. They had brought out from England two Peacock collapsible boats and to complete our fleet I bought an Orinoco *lancha*, a large flat-bottomed scow with a single enormous sail.

We went up as far as Ciudad Bolivar, the head of steam navigation, on the old side-wheeler "Bolivar," and there took to our boats, which were provisioned for six months and carried seven natives to do the hard work. There was only a slight current in the river, which was at low stage as it was then "midsummer"—their winter comes with the rainy season in our midsummer,—while the steady trade wind from the Atlantic blew straight upstream, so we made good progress under sail. It was a lazy trip in the early stages and a tiresome one, for there were only a few dirty hamlets along the way and the llanos stretched away on both sides of us in an interminable monotony. At the confluence of the Apure and Arauca Rivers, two hundred and fifty miles above Ciudad Bolivar, we found a great inland delta, larger

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and more bewildering than that at the mouth of the Orinoco where there are thirty-six separate channels that have been charted. This delta, like the one on the coast, was formed by the tremendous force and volume of the "midwinter" floods, which had built up so many islands of soft mud that it was at times difficult for us to stick to the main stream.

One of our most interesting experiences was at the junction of the Rio Meta and the Orinoco, one hundred and fifty miles farther on, where we encountered the so-called "musical stones," of which we had heard marvellous tales from the natives. These are granite cliffs which, we had been told, gave out at sunrise sounds closely resembling the tones of an organ. This mythical music, as we regarded it, caused us to stay here several days and finally, on one very cool morning, by placing our ears to the rocks, we distinctly heard subterranean growls, groans, and whistles, which could without great stretch of the imagination be compared to the notes of an organ, though it must needs be a wheezy one to make the similarity approximately honest. We all knew something about geology and, without pretending to give a scientific conclusion, it was our opinion that the sounds were caused by the hot air of the day, which the rocks retained during the night, being driven out by the cool

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air of the early morning through narrow fissures that were partially obstructed by thin layers of mica, lying at an angle to the general stratification, which served as reeds. The resultant vibrations were musical enough to produce a weird sensation as we listened to them, and it was easy to imagine the effect they would have on the ignorant and superstitious natives, and the stories for which they furnished a foundation. The Orinoco is navigable as far as the Meta for light-draft steamers at all seasons of the year, but it may be centuries before the "musical stones" become an advertised attraction for tourists.

At Atures, one hundred miles above, and again at Maypures, just beyond, were two rapids around which our boats had to be carried; but with these exceptions it was plain sailing, or paddling, until we crossed the line into Brazil. Another hundred miles beyond the rapids brought us to the jumping-off place of the world—the indescribably filthy little hamlet of San Fernando de Atabapo, built where the Guaviare River comes down from the mountains of Colombia to join the Orinoco. It is on the border of Venezuela and Colombia and its population is largely made up of murderers and escaped convicts from both countries, with a few from near-by Brazil. A number of the leading citizens undertook to waylay us as we

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were leaving the place but the only result of their misguided effort was that two or three of them received what the law would have administered if it had been given a chance.

From the time we left Ciudad Bolivar we had been sailing through a veritable wilderness, with human habitations few and far between, but after we left San Fernando de Atabapo we travelled through the primeval forest, which came down to the river's edge on both sides. Its only inhabitants were widely scattered Indians, who were inquisitive enough but not at all ugly. There were miles and miles of magnificent rubber trees, which were especially abundant along the Casiquiare, and great stretches of vanilla and cacao growing wild. The Orinoco is indeed a wasted waterway. The vast empire it drains, covering more than half of Venezuela, is marvellously rich in minerals and in its forests, and could easily be made as rich in agriculture. Yet when we made our trip there were fewer people living along it than there had been four hundred years before when Ordaz, the Spanish explorer, ascended it to the mouth of the Meta, and I doubt if there has been any increase in the population since our visit. Ten Hudson Rivers could be added to or taken from the Orinoco without affecting it, yet it is traversed only by the native *lanchas* and *bongos*, or dugouts.

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We turned into the Casiquiare River, two hundred miles above San Fernando de Atabapo, with considerable regret, for we would have greatly liked to follow the Orinoco to its unexplored source in the mysterious Parima Mountains, where is said to dwell a race of white Indians, who are popularly supposed to stand guard, with deadly blow pipes shooting darts that produce instant death, over vast treasures of virgin gold. But that would have taken many months more and we were not prepared for so long a trip. The priceless forest which surrounded us was filled with game of all kinds and great snakes, and alive with birds of wondrous plumage. There were so many snakes, in fact, that we anchored our boats at night and slept in them in the middle of the river, where we had nothing to fear but the enormous crocodiles which poked us with their ugly snouts to prevent us from oversleeping. We landed every day to stretch our legs and shoot, with ridiculous ease, enough game to keep us in fresh meat, but we never camped on shore at night.

After following the Casiquiare for one hundred and fifty miles or more we came to the parting of the ways—the point at which the Rio Negro, coming down from the foothills of the Andes, five hundred miles away, divides to feed both the Orinoco and the

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Amazon—and solved the mystery of the two rivers. There was no connecting canal of slack water, as the Frenchman was said to have reported. The Rio Negro, a wide and deep stream, forms the boundary between Venezuela and Colombia for nearly two hundred miles. At two degrees north latitude, or about one hundred and twenty miles from the equator, it divides, the smaller part, approximately one-third of the volume, forming the Casiquiare, which runs east for a short distance and then north to the Orinoco, while the main stream runs south and then east until it empties into the Amazon at Manaos. Though we had no map to guide us the situation seemed plain when we reached the larger river, which fed the Casiquiare, and by following the downward course of that stream until we were certain it was the Rio Negro, we settled the question.

Just below the junction of the Ucayari River with the Rio Negro, almost directly under the equator, we came to a succession of falls and rapids around which we made a portage. From there on, through the same silent wilderness of natural wealth that we had traversed for weeks, we leisurely sailed and drifted down to the Amazon, for the blistering heat discouraged all physical effort that was not mandatory. It was not until we reached the lower reaches of the river that

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we found men gathering rubber, and they were taking only ounces where tons were at their hands. We reached Manaos early in May, 1874. We had been six months on the trip and had covered all of two thousand miles which, everything considered, was fast travelling. Aside from its educational value the exploration had been delightful, and though tired from living so long in cramped quarters we were all in better health than when we left Trinidad.

My companions, who rejoiced in having been thrown in the way of greater sport and more interesting experiences than they had expected to find, were ready to return to England and I arranged to go with them. After resting for a week or two we went down to Para on a river boat and thence to Rio Janiero on one of the Lloyd Brazilerio steamships. From there we sailed for England on the Royal Mail steamship "Elbe," commanded by Captain Moir, who was in command of the "Trent" when Mason and Slidell were taken off. On the way across I compiled a full report of the exploring trip which I mailed to Guzman, with a promise that I would return to Venezuela within a few years. I left my British friends at Southampton and went to London to join Frank Norton and start for the China Sea, of which he had pictured so much that was good in my sight.

CHAPTER VII

PREYING ON PIRATES

AS a boy it was my ambition to fight Indians, but if I had known as much about them then as I do now, I would have selected pirates. They have none of the claims on life which the real, red, native Americans enjoy, and they can be fought on the glorious sea instead of on land, which adds to the inherent excitement. It was in the Summer of 1874 that I made my first plunge into piracy, for, with all of the trimmings and aids to deception stripped away, that was what it really amounted to. I did not know into just what I was being led when I embarked in this new enterprise; but I am frank to say that it would have made no difference, for a free translation of the word "pirate" is "adventure of the first order," and that was what I was looking for.

When I reached London, after my strange escape from execution in Santo Domingo and the exploration of the headwaters of the Orinoco and the Rio Negro, Frank Norton was coming up from the Mediterranean with the "Leckwith," carrying a general cargo, and I had not long to wait for him. He was joyous when I

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told him I was ready to accompany him to the China Sea, which he had pictured as an El Dorado of excitement, with many golden Manos that might be converted into Bank of England notes. There was to be no filibustering there for we had no thought of playing against the concert of Europe with our one little fiddle, even had there been any prospective revolutions worth the hatching; but Norton insisted that there was plenty of adventure to be found and much money to be made in handling equally illegitimate cargoes which included no explosives or munitions of war. As he was familiar with that part of the world I took his word for it, without going into minute details. He said we would need the "Leckwith" and two ships to carry on the business to the best advantage, so I selected the "Surprise," an American brig, and the "Florence," a topsail schooner, both stout, fast ships. I put Lorensen on the "Leckwith" as sailing master, George Brown on the "Surprise," and old Bill Heather on the "Florence." The "Surprise" took on a general cargo for Japan and was ordered to rendezvous at Hong Kong, while the "Florence" loaded for Singapore. Norton and I followed in the "Leckwith." Two brass cannon were mounted in place of the yacht's guns she carried and we took on board four small carronades, a French

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mitrailleuse, and several hundred rifles, cutlasses, and side arms, with an abundance of ammunition, all of which were stored in the hold.

Before our departure I had printed on parchment, in exact imitation of the genuine, certificates of registry in English, Dutch, German, French, and Spanish, and seals made to correspond to them. These I filled out, as occasion demanded, in the name the particular ship bore at the time, and in the nationality which I thought would furnish the best protection. I also had certificates of health, consular clearances and bills of health, custom house clearances, and shipping certificates printed in different languages. Forged service certificates were also issued to old men of long service who were competent officers but who could not pass the technical examinations provided for in the amended maritime laws. These and the certificates of registry were aged with a solution of iron and, if necessary, rubbed on the cabin floor to add to their years. I had used similar forged papers while filibustering in the West Indies but had never had such an elaborate outfit, though I was never afterward without it. With these papers I could give a ship a registry under any flag and make it appear that she had come from any port that suited my purpose. They were signed with an illegible scrawl, as

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are the genuine. To further complicate matters the "Leckwith" was supplied with a telescopic smoke-stack which, when lowered, was completely hidden. She was schooner-rigged and could be transformed into a fore and aft schooner by dousing the stack and housing the yards on the foremast, or into a brig by putting yards on the mainmast. Similar changes of rig could be made on the "Florence" and "Surprise." I never used a ship on which this could not be done. The efficacy of these precautions is proved by the fact that I have never lost a cargo of contraband, though I have handled scores of them.

With provision made for all of the deception and trickery which experience and foresight could suggest we headed for Singapore, to begin a career of adventure such as my wild mind never had conceived, even in its dearest dreams. On the long trip out I whiled away the time in an effort to evolve a torpedo of a new type. I had been interested in high explosives all my life and had long believed that a non-dirigible torpedo could be devised which would be an improvement on our own Harvey,—which was towed in a bridle and was not practicable for a greater distance than two or three hundred yards,—and which would have advantages over the dirigible type. To facilitate my experiments I had on board a lot of sheet brass

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and before the end of the trip I had developed a torpedo that I regarded as perfection and which I afterward used with success, though it finally got me into trouble in South America. It was six feet long, thirty inches in diameter, and shaped like a fat cigar. The inside was lined with air cylinders to give it the required buoyancy, and inside of these was packed the explosive charge, of wet gun-cotton or dynamite. It was towed by a wire or small rope attached to the blunt nose, from which projected six spider-like arms two feet long, and alternating with these were six shorter arms extending outward from the thickest part of the torpedo. The forcing backward of any one of these arms cut off a shear pin and released a spring which set off a fulminate of mercury cap. This exploded a disc of dry gun-cotton which set off the main charge. The shear pins were of copper wire of any desired thickness, but were intended to be only thick enough to prevent the arms from being forced backward, and the torpedo discharged, by the current of a river or by the resistance of the water when being towed or by small driftwood which might be encountered.

The buoyancy of the loaded torpedo could easily be calculated and by means of the air cylinders it could be kept awash or floated just below the surface,

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the latter being the preferred method when it was to be used during the day. The towing wire or rope was kept on the surface or just below it by small floats, distributed at such distances that they would attract no attention even in the improbable event of their being seen. The torpedo was intended to be towed across the course of the vessel that was to be destroyed. The moment the ship's bow picked up the towing rope her fate was settled, for whether the rope was fifty yards or five miles long it was simply a question of time until the torpedo was dragged alongside and exploded by the pressure of one of the arms against the side of the vessel. The torpedo could be towed astern of a ship or a launch or even an innocent rowboat. In river work it could be stretched across the stream with a line at each end, the shorter one being only strong enough to withstand the current, so it would part easily when the unfriendly ship picked up the line attached to the nose of the torpedo. I was greatly pleased with my invention and it was not long until I had an opportunity to prove that it was a complete success.

We reached Singapore more than a month ahead of the "Florence" and on our arrival there Norton unfolded his whole scheme to me. The gist of it was that we were to prey on the pirates who infested the

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China Sea, and particularly that part of it lying between Singapore, Sumatra, and Borneo, which was dotted with islands and beautifully suited by nature to their plundering profession. Every ship going to Europe from China, Indo-China, Siam, and from the Philippines and the network of islands to the south of them, as well as vessels coming up from the Indian Ocean through the Strait of Sunda, between Sumatra and Java, had to run the gantlet of this piratical nest, and many were the good ships that ended their cruises there, along with their passengers and crews. It was here the pirates held out last in their long and bloody fight against civilization, as the present state of mankind in general is called. The British Government had been trying for years to put an end to their operations but there were so many of the islands, and the opportunities for concealment and escape were so numerous, that the undertaking was a gigantic one. It was not until years after my tragic appearance on this stage that it was officially announced that piracy had been suppressed. Even that long delayed declaration was not altogether true, for in that accursed region, now well known but yet mysterious, piracy is still being carried on, even to this day, though in a small and desultory way. There were a few islands farther north, off the southern coast of

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Indo-China, among which the pirates sometimes rendezvoused to lay in wait for their prey, but in ordinary weather it was easy for ships to keep clear of these danger spots. But they could not avoid those islands lying northeast of Singapore, and it was there that most of the merchantmen were looted.

The pirates were chiefly Chinese, with a considerable number of Malays and some Dyaks. As to bravery and bloodthirstiness there was little choice between them. They were all desperate villains and their thirst for gold was exceeded only by their truly Oriental cunning. When they fell from wounds they would watch for an opportunity to hamstring their opponents or disembowel them with their long, crooked knives, which were as sharp as razors. After we discovered this devilish trait no quarter was ever shown them. When one of them fell he was shot through the head or stabbed, to make sure that he would do no further harm. Nothing else could be done with such an enemy. The Chinese operated chiefly in large junks, with which they could go well out to sea. Most of them carried guns of considerable size, while all of them were supplied with a multitude of stink-pots,—their favorite weapon. These were round earthenware pots, twelve or fifteen inches in diameter, filled with a black mixture of the consist-

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ency of moist earth, which was lighted just before the missile was thrown. They were handled in a sling, such as every small boy has used but on a larger scale, and could be thrown with great accuracy for one hundred feet or more. When the pot struck the opposing ship it broke open and the contents spread out on the deck, giving off a thick, pungent, and vile-smelling smoke which would quickly produce complete asphyxiation if it was inhaled at close range. If the smoking mass was left long enough undisturbed it would set fire to the ship. The pirates themselves were largely immune to this horrible smoke and under its cover, following a rain of stink-pots, they would board a ship almost unseen and have her defenders, whom they always outnumbered, at a great disadvantage from the start. When fighting at close quarters the Chinese used long, curved swords, something like a Turkish *yataghan*, while the Malays were armed with the *krese*, a short, double-edged sword with serrated edges. Both were murderous weapons and the pirates were graduated experts in the use of them; in fact, they preferred their butcher knives to firearms, for they were miserable marksmen. As soon as an engagement became general they would throw away their guns and pistols and use their swords, with both hands, striking powerful, chopping blows.

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The Malays and Dyaks used *proas* or *feluccas*, light, strong, low-lying vessels from sixty to one hundred feet in length, from ten to sixteen feet wide, and five or six feet deep, with less than three feet draft. They were rigged with two large lateen sails and were very fast. The only material difference between them was that the proas were supplied with long sweeps with which they could be driven along at a fair rate of speed when there was no wind. The junks were used for outside work, while the proas and feluccas kept close inshore, seldom going more than fifteen miles out. On account of their shallow draft they were easily hidden in the mouths of rivers and creeks, and when so concealed they could not be seen at a distance of half a mile.

It was this ease of escape, and the fact that unless they were caught red-handed conviction was impossible, which combined to make the stamping out of the pirates such a tremendous task. The junks always carried just enough cargo to enable them to pose, technically, as peaceful traders and, with the aid of their friends afloat and ashore, they could easily prove an alibi, or anything else that was needed. When closely pursued by a suspicious warship and certain to be overhauled and inspected, they would throw overboard their surplus of arms and, if neces-

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sary, any loot they happened to have on board, to remove all incriminating evidence. Through an elaborate system of spies the pirate chiefs were constantly advised as to the movements of the warships and kept their craft as far away from them as possible. Thus it was that unless a cruiser happened along just as a merchantman was being looted, and her crew butchered, or immediately afterward, the chance of capturing the scoundrels was remote. Even with the large retributive fleet of cruisers and gunboats that finally was established in those waters, beauteous and romantic but thickly dotted with villainous havens, the number of piracies that were punished, including the joyous justice which Norton and I meted out, was trifling when compared with the total of murder and robbery.

The chief of a large section of the Chinese pirates was old Moy Sen, a rich Chinaman who lived in a handsome home in Canton and posed as a legitimate trader. He owned a large fleet of junks and one steamer, and there was not a ship that left Hong Kong with a rich cargo that he did not know all about. The evil genius of the Malays was a shrewd scoundrel known as Leandrio, and he and Moy Sen operated under what would be known to-day as a "gentlemen's agreement," by which they divided up

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the territory, in a general way, and did not interfere with each other. As a matter of fact there were practically no honest trading ships in that section, with the exception of the big merchantmen engaged in the export trade. All of the coasting ships were either pirates themselves, when the conditions were favorable, or were in league with the pirates, to whom they carried information as to the value of cargoes being prepared for shipment and their probable date of departure. The result was that there was not a ship, except the easily distinguished merchantman, which we did not come to regard as legitimate prey.

Norton argued that the pirates were bound to keep on robbing and burning and murdering in spite of anything we could do, and that we could derive plenty of excitement and large profits by robbing them. Incidentally, he contended, we would put a lot of them out of business for good and all, thus contributing to the end desired by all nations. I fell in with his plan heartily, for, while I cared little for the money that was to be made, it promised as lively adventures as I could wish for. It was arranged that I should pose as Dr. Burnet, a rich English physician who was cruising in his private yacht for his health. To make it appear that they were engaged in legitimate commerce, the "Florence" and "Surprise"

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were to carry some general cargoes from port to port among the islands but were to so shape their cruises that they would be at certain fixed points on or about given dates, so that we could keep closely in touch with them. They were to be given large crews and so heavily armed as to be safe from piratical attacks. The "Leckwith" was to do all of the preying on the pirates and the loot we took from them was to be turned over to the other ships at the meeting places. This would make it unnecessary for us to put into port often as we could use our sails a great deal and husband our coal. This arrangement, and the changes which could quickly be made in the rig of all the ships, would, we figured, remove us from suspicion, for a long time at least. Agencies for our legitimate cargoes were established in Sumatra, on the island of Banca, where there were extensive tin mines, in Borneo and Rajah Brooke's independent government of Sarawak in North Borneo, and at other convenient places. It was arranged that the bulk of our loot should be sent to a firm of Chinamen at Singapore, who dealt largely in dishonest cargoes but were absolutely honest with their clients.

With the schedules of the "Florence" and "Surprise" established and with the "Leckwith's" bunkers stuffed with coal, we headed for the islands in

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search of pirates. We then had a crew of about seventy-five men, though at different times we had as few as fifty and as many as one hundred, independent of the "black gang" in the fire and engine rooms. The crews of the three ships were frequently interchanged, except for about fifteen especially brave and reckless fellows who were always kept on the "Leck-with." With all of our sails set and in the guise of a trading ship we sometimes trapped the pirates into coming alongside and grappling with us, which made it easy work for us, but when we had reason to think they had valuable booty on board we went at them full tilt under steam and took it away from them. All of our guns, which were always unshipped when we went into port, were close up against the rail and were concealed under what looked like deck cargo, but it was the work of only a moment to cast off their covering and lower a section of the bulwarks long enough to give them a wide radius of action.

Our first experience was a profitable one. When near the "hunting grounds" we lowered the smoke-stack, got up our canvas, and sailed along awaiting developments. We were getting in among the islands when we met a big junk which had just looted and scuttled a richly laden Brazilian barkentine. She had much more than enough on board to pay her for one

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trip, but cupidity got the better of her commander and he put about and came after us, thinking we were only a trading schooner but might have something on board worth taking. We made a pretence of trying to get away, which we could have done, for the "Leckwith" footed fast even under sail, but in reality we eased our sheets to hasten matters along. When he was close astern of us, with the wind abeam, we luffed up, got out guns ready for action in a jiffy and, as we crossed his bows, raked him fore and aft with our carronades, which were loaded almost to the muzzle with slugs and nails. Before he could change his course, with his decks littered with dead and mangled, we came about and gave him a broadside at close quarters, along with a deadly rifle fire from the hitherto unseen members of the crew who had been concealed in the 'tween decks. He replied to this blast with a lot of stink-pots, only a few of which came aboard and were tossed into the sea before any ill effects were felt from their nauseating fumes, and a weak and poorly directed fire from his guns. Taken completely by surprise and with more than half of their number littering the reddened deck, the pirates were panic-stricken. Before they could regain their senses we came about again and gave them another broadside which took all the fight out of them, if

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there had been any left, and put them at our mercy. As we ranged alongside, keeping up a rifle fire but disdaining any further use of our guns, they managed to launch a couple of boats and all who could get into them pulled for the nearest island. When we threw our grappling irons and hauled in on them the few survivors who had strength enough left to get to the rail threw themselves overboard and swam for it. The first man aboard of the junk had one of his legs almost severed by the wicked sword of a badly wounded Chinaman, and after that bit of fiendishness our men lost no time in making sure that the rest of them were really dead. We took out of the junk fully one hundred thousand dollars' worth of specie, silk, tea, porcelain, and drugs and then set fire to her, leaving her to bury her own dead.

After that easily won victory we trapped and sank half a dozen proas and feluccas in the same way, though with more spirited resistance in some cases, for we were so anxious to get things to going that we threw off our mask before we had them at such close quarters as we got the junk. We had two men killed in these engagements and a dozen more or less seriously injured. Norton sustained an ugly cut on the leg that sent him to the hospital and I got a slash on the arm that gave me considerable trouble

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for a few days. In only one instance did a ship get away from us and that was when two proas attacked us on either side in a dead calm that settled before we could get steam up. We could not change our position, while they manœuvred with their long oars and one of them escaped, though she took a lot of dead with her. We got nothing from them to speak of but there was excitement *in extenso* and we gloried in it. Norton had not overdrawn the picture of the adventurous China Sea.

We had turned our cargo over to the "Florence," along with a number of wounded men, and were back among the islands, though outside of the regular course of sailing ships, when early one evening a full-rigged ship hove in sight. She passed us but was not more than six miles away when we saw flashes that told us she had been attacked. We had our fires banked, for it was just at the break of the monsoon when the weather is variable and the winds uncertain, so we lost no time in going to her assistance. As we closed in we saw a Malay felucca on each side of her and the pirates swarming on her decks, with the crew putting up a brave fight. Running the "Leckwith" up on her starboard quarter, we threw our men aboard of her and they went at the pirates savagely from the rear. I led the boarding party for

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it looked as though it would be one of the kind of fights that I never would miss. In those days I was young, athletic, and vigorous and I had rather have a fight with death at one end of it than anything else. No matter where I went, or what the odds against us, I knew the men of the "Leckwith" would be at my heels, for a braver set of dare-devils never lived.

The Malays outnumbered us more than two to one, but we went at them with a fury that was new to them, and were slowly forcing them back toward their one good boat—we had smashed the other one to bits when we slammed alongside—when a beautiful white yacht came tearing up on the port quarter and sent three boatloads of men to our assistance in such smart style that I took her to be a gunboat, though the quick glance I took at her showed her lines to be unusually fine for a warship. Her party clambered over the bows under command of a stockily built young officer wearing what looked like the uniform of a naval captain, and we had the pirates between us. I understood later, when I learned who and what they were, why these reinforcements, instead of discouraging the Malays, caused them to fight with renewed desperation. But they could not withstand our combined rush and the last of them soon went over the side into their proa, which

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drifted away into the darkness when they cut her loose. However, in the last few minutes of fighting the young British officer, as I took him to be, sustained a savage cut in his right shoulder, and after we had laid aside our dead and given our wounded rough attention I was surprised to receive an inquiry from him as to whether we had a surgeon on board. I replied that I was a surgeon and, taking him aboard the "Leckwith," dressed his wound on the cabin table. I then saw that his uniform was that of a captain, but not of a naval officer. He told me his name was Deverell but when I asked him the name of his ship he answered evasively, and I had learned the ways of the China Sea too well to press the question.

"Your wound is rather a bad one," I told him, "and is likely to require further attention. I am simply loafing and expect to be cruising in this neighborhood for some time, even though it does seem to be pretty thick with pirates. I will be glad to have you call on me if I can be of any service to you."

He mystified me still more when he replied: "We know you, Doctor, and will know where to find you if it becomes necessary to take further advantage of your kindness."

I had not time just then to think much about the strange incident, for the fight had been a bloody one

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and there were many men who needed attention. We had six men killed and there were fully twenty-five more with injuries of some sort. When I came to look myself over I found that one bullet had grazed the top of my head and another my chest, while the right shoulder of my jacket had been sliced off by a cut that, had it been properly placed, would have taken my arm with it. My only injury was a trifling flesh wound on my leg. Had I been less of a fatalist narrow escapes of that kind, to which I grew accustomed, might have affected my nerves, but instead they were only entertaining. It interested me, in every fight, to see just how close I had come to being killed, knowing full well that death could not add my name to the list until my time came, and that then there would be no way of avoiding it.

When we got to clearing up the decks nearly sixty dead Malays were thrown overboard. The merchantman, which was an English bark, had twelve of her crew killed and so many of the survivors were badly cut up that only six men were fit for duty. We left enough of our men on board to work the ship and convoyed her to within two hundred miles of Singapore, where, with a fair wind and a smooth sea, she was able to proceed without danger. That episode netted us not only a glorious fight but a great reputa-

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tion as the friend and protector of honest shipping. In fact, it brought us too much fame, for when we put into Labuan, a British island off the north coast of Borneo, for coal, after seeing the merchantman safely on her way, and reported the incident, we had to get out in a hurry to avoid a lot of innocent questions as to who Dr. Burnet was and where he came from.

On our way back to the islands from Labuan we sighted the mysterious yacht whose commander I had attended. Evidently she was looking for us for she changed her course as soon as she made us out, and sent a boat alongside with a request that I come aboard, as the captain was very ill. I found him suffering with surgical fever, as I had predicted, and in rather a bad way. I dressed his wound and treated him and stood by for three or four days, visiting him twice a day and returning immediately to the "Leck-with," for while my services were plainly appreciated it seemed that I was not wanted on the strange ship any longer than was necessary. There was an air of mystery about her that puzzled and fascinated me. As I entered Deverell's cabin on my first visit I thought I heard the rustle of a skirt in the passageway behind me. Before I could make any inquiry Deverell, as though reading my mind, requested me to ask him no questions about anything relating to

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the ship. On my last visit, when I told him he needed no further attention, he said, after thanking me, "I am master here and I am not. No doubt things seem strange to you, and they really are stranger than you think, but I cannot tell you more now. Fate seems to have thrown us together, however, and I believe we shall see more of each other and get better acquainted. I hope so. Good-bye."

Cruising westward after parting company with the ship of mystery we ran right into a series of profitable engagements. Four ships had left Hong Kong together but only one got through. The booty which the pirates took from the others we captured from them, in two small junks and three large proas, which we destroyed. We transferred our cargo to the "Florence," near South Natuna Island, and stood off to the north while she headed for Singapore. We were three or four hours away from her when I had a strange presentiment that I should have stayed with her. The feeling was so strong that I put the "Leck-with" about, caught up with her, and went on board, with my traps. Expecting to have a lot of idle time I took along my torpedo, with which I was still experimenting.

A week later we were in a particularly dangerous place, near where the Brazilian barkentine had been

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scuttled. Late in the afternoon as we entered a narrow passage, we sighted a big proa close to an island on the port bow, and less than half a mile farther on we came on another one partly hidden in the mouth of a creek in a larger island on the starboard hand. There was not a sign of life on either one of them but I knew their crews were close by and felt that we were in for it. I was fussing with the torpedo when we came upon them and it struck me that this would be a good chance to put it to the test, if both of them attacked us at once, which I supposed they would do. We had neither fulminate of mercury nor gun-cotton aboard but I had been working to overcome that very difficulty and had arranged the firing pin so that it would discharge a cartridge into an explosive charge of black powder. We packed the chamber with powder, and filled enough air cylinders to keep the torpedo afloat, bent on a towing line of new manila rope, one hundred fathoms long, and had everything in readiness by the time it was dark.

We kept a sharp lookout and it was not long until we heard the soft *chug* of oars off the starboard bow. Our whaleboat, which was manned and waiting, at once set off in a course which, we figured, would carry the towing line across the bow of the proa. A few minutes later we made out the other proa coming

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up astern on the port side. The pair of them got so close that it looked as though something had gone wrong with my torpedo and I was just about to divide our crew to meet them on both sides when there was a flash and a roar less than fifty yards away, and the complete success of my invention was demonstrated. The proa was thrown out of the water, turned over, and badly smashed up. We never knew how many of her crew were killed by the explosion but not many could have escaped. The other craft swung around to board us but we riddled it with full charges from the fore and aft carronades and it began to sink. The survivors took to the water and a lot of them attacked the whaleboat, which had towed the torpedo, as it was making its way back to the ship. The boat's crew were prepared for them and their heavy cutlasses chopped off every hand that grasped the gunwale and split open every head they could reach.

At Singapore, where we discharged our cargo, our agents reported that Moy Sen was vowing vengeance on us for the loot we had wrested from him and the havoc we had spread among his fleet, and that he had caused the report to be actively circulated at Hong Kong that the "Leckwith" was not a private yacht but a pirate, preying on legitimate commerce. As a result many robberies with which we had nothing

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at all to do were being laid at our door, and we were advised to be cautious. We worked our way back to the rendezvous and, after consulting with Norton, I took my interpreter, Ah Fen, who was half "Chinkie" and half Malay, from the "Leckwith" and went to Hong Kong on the "Surprise" to see just what was going on.

CHAPTER VIII

"THE BEAUTIFUL WHITE DEVIL"

"**T**HE Beautiful White Devil," a woman pirate whom I at first regarded as a purely fanciful being, born of the unreal atmosphere of the East, came into my life, in which she was destined to play a most important part, at Hong Kong in the early days of 1876. I had gone there in search of authentic information concerning the attitude and plans of old Moy Sen, overlord of all the Chinese pirates, who was reported to have declared an intention to bury my harassing ships and all on board of them, in return for our vigorous operations against him. This threat had given a new interest to a game of which I was beginning to tire, for I had then been waging war on the pirates for more than a year, and it was getting monotonous. I landed quietly at night from the "Surprise," which remained far out in the roadstead, and went to the old Queen's Hotel, where I clung to my role of a rich English physician, travelling for his health, but assumed a new name, which I cannot recall. My "Chinkie" interpreter, Ah Fen, I sent on up to Canton to secretly gain such informa-

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tion as he could pick up from a relative in the camp of the boss buccaneer of the China Sea.

While waiting for his report I lounged around the hotel and steered my casual conversation with the *habitués* toward the subject in which I was most interested. Soon I began to hear weird stories of a woman pirate who, while never molesting honest merchantmen, preyed mercilessly and successfully on the Chinese and Malay pirates, just as Norton and I were doing. It was said that she was exquisitely beautiful of face and diabolically black of heart; that she led her band of cut-throats in person and gloried in the shedding of black and yellow blood by the barrel. Her recreation from wholesale butchery was found in the companionship of occasional white men whom she ran across and who gladly accompanied her to her retreat, located no one knew where, only to be killed when she wearied of them. According to these tales, which I at first regarded as purely imaginative, she travelled in a steam yacht of phenomenal speed and had never failed in her desperate exploits. Though she had been in the business for years no one in Hong Kong had ever seen her and she was known only as the "Beautiful White Devil," which name, from all accounts, was well suited to her. It occurred to me at once that if such a woman really did exist it

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might have been her ship that came to our assistance on the night of our battle with the Malays on the deck of the British bark, and whose captain I had attended under strange circumstances, and I saw visions of a meeting and perhaps closer acquaintance with her; but they were only fleeting fancies, for I could not make myself believe the tales that were told me. Not but what I wanted to believe them, and tried to, for next to adventure I loved a beautiful woman; if the two could be combined, the result would be an absolutely ideal condition, even though the feminine fancy did run to murder; but my reason told me I was dreaming of the impossible.

However, after I had heard the report of Ah Fen, who returned in about two weeks, bubbling over with information and gossip, I put more confidence in what I had been told, for he repeated the same wild story, with elaborations and variations. It was a well established fact in the minds of Moy Sen and his followers, he said, that there actually was a woman pirate who preyed on and destroyed the regular pirates, and she was as much hated as we were, or more, for she had been following that calling, with much energy, for years. It was said she had inherited an avenging oath against the pirates from some male member of her family, who had been a terror to them before her,

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and she was carrying it out with fanatical fervor. This was the story brought in by pirates who had escaped from junks and proas she had attacked, and who gave thrilling accounts of her demoniacal fury in leading her men. Moy Sen, my interpreter reported, was swearing renewed vengeance on both of us but, inasmuch as the lady seemed to bear a charmed life, he proposed to go after me first. He attributed to me the destruction of some of his junks that I had never seen, while, to balance accounts, the robbery of some of his ships which I had looted was laid at the door of my woman contemporary. This convinced me that there was a woman pirate, or, which I still believed to be more likely, a man masquerading as a woman, and that the pirate chief had confused our exploits. He was setting some sort of a trap for me, according to the inside gossip picked up by Ah Fen, and was determined to sweep the sea clear of my ships, at least.

I had sent the "Surprise" away as soon as she landed me, with orders to return in a month, ostensibly in search of cargo, and pick me up. She was about due when a man called at my hotel one evening and asked if an English physician was stopping there. I was pointed out to him in the billiard room and as he came toward me I recognized Captain Deverell,

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but he was as formal as a stranger and I took my cue from that and did not indicate that I knew him. He asked if he could consult with me and I took him to my room, where he assumed a much more cordial air.

“I called,” he said, “to invite you to take a cruise with me so that we may get better acquainted and I can show you my appreciation of your kindness of a few weeks ago.”

“How long will you be out?” I asked.

“A week or a month; whatever time suits your pleasure.”

I did some quick thinking. If there was a woman pirate it was her ship that Deverell commanded, I was sure. If I accepted his invitation I might go the way of other men whom, if the reports I had heard were to be trusted, she had picked up, and who never returned. Whether she was a “Devil” or whether it was her ship from which the invitation came I could not ask without showing some apprehension that would be impolite. Besides, I had previously been requested by Deverell to ask him no questions about himself or his ship and I inferred that this inhibition was still in force; if he had wanted me to know more than he had indicated he would have volunteered the information. It was an uncanny proceeding, yet the

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very mystery of it attracted me as a magnet does steel. Furthermore, here was a brand new adventure, right within my grasp, and if it was to end my career then it was because my time had come, and that was all there was to it.

With my thoughts running in that channel a decision was quickly reached and I told Deverell I would be glad to go with him. I packed my bag and turned it over to a man whom Deverell summoned from the street. Ah Fen was instructed to watch for the "Surprise," rejoin the "Leckwith," and report to Norton what he had told me, and tell him to have me picked up at Hong Kong in a month or six weeks. Late in the evening we went to the Bund where a boat that was waiting at an out-of-the-way landing up near the native quarter took us out to the ship, which was lying fully six miles offshore, well beyond the usual anchorage. It was the same ship I had seen several times before but her rig had been so altered, by taking the rake out of her stack and shortening her spars, and by changing her upper works, that I could not have recognized her if I had seen her under any other conditions. Her sides were discolored and dirty, due to the skilful use of paint, and she looked like an old tramp. But on board of her were all the comforts and conveniences of a yacht, with the discipline of a

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warship. She was about the size of the “Leckwith,” registering probably five hundred tons net, and with the removal of her dummy superstructure which concealed six carronades, her deck was clear, except for the wheelhouse and the captain’s room behind it. The gun deck below was devoted entirely to living quarters arranged with an eye to comfort. Those for the crew ran back to amidships, for she carried all of a hundred men. Aft of them were the officers’ quarters and in the stern, cut off from the rest of the ship, were the rooms of the real commander, which were large and sumptuously furnished.

As soon as we were on board it was “Up anchor and full speed to sea.” Appropriately enough, I was given the cabin of the surgeon, who had died recently, to which fact I owed my presence on the ship. Devorell took me into his room and we talked until midnight. Soon after we got under way he satisfied my silent impatience by throwing open a panel and exposing a life-size painting of the most beautiful woman I had ever seen.

“Is that the Beautiful White Devil?” I asked, unable longer to restrain the questions that were choking me.

“That is our Queen,” he replied gravely, “and it is

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by that name alone that she is known to us and spoken of on this ship."

"She certainly is entitled to the first part of the name by which she is known ashore, whether or not she deserves the last section of it," I said, with open admiration.

His answer left no doubt as to whose ship I was on. "That picture may do partial justice to her face but it is impossible that it could portray the beauty of her heart. Instead of being cold-blooded and blood-thirsty, as you seem to have heard, she is tender and sympathetic and she has devoted a great part of her money to the relief of suffering humanity. She deprecates killing even villainous Malays and Chinks, but she will not be defeated, cost what it will. Never since I joined the ship have I seen a wanton act of cruelty."

"What is her life, and what is the motive of it?" I asked.

"She will have to tell you that herself, but before you see her I want to warn you. Every man who sees the Queen falls in love with her, and if you think you are going to be like the rest you had better go over the side right now."

"How is one to keep from falling in love with

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her?” I inquired, with some anxiety, still lost in admiration of the lovely face on the canvas.

“If one philosophizes and keeps his love to himself it is all right, but this lady is not to be won by any man. She has devoted her life to a particular purpose and we have devoted our lives to her.”

“That sounds very romantic and interesting,” I observed, already half suspicious that Deverell himself was in love with her. “What is the special purpose to which you are all pledged?”

A shrug of the shoulders and a smile made up the only answer.

Deverell then closed the panel and made me the subject of conversation. He asked all manner of questions about my life, and when I brought the story down to the China Sea he showed a familiarity with my movements which indicated a system of spies that aroused my admiration, and I was free in expressing it. It was through their elaborate system, he admitted, that they had learned I was in Hong Kong and where I was stopping. He admitted, too, that they had been in touch with me from the day I entered their waters and had come to regard me as a kindred soul, to which fact I owed my invitation from their Queen.

It was considerably after eight bells before I retired

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but my sleep was not long or heavy, for the strangeness of the situation and its possibilities impressed me, not with fear but with exultant expectancy. At breakfast time Deverell, wearing a smart uniform, escorted me aft to the private quarters of the Queen, which reminded me of those of an officer of flag rank in the American Navy. They had the same private galley and air of exclusiveness of a flagship, but they were much more spacious and were fitted out with a daintiness that bespoke generations of culture. The dining-room was a reproduction in miniature of those one finds in the best homes of England, with nothing about it to suggest the sea. Back of it and separated from it by odd Chinese curtains, was a luxurious lounging room, with large ports cut through the overhang. On one side of it was the Queen's sitting-room and library, and on the other her boudoir.

I was ushered into the dining-room and in a moment the Queen appeared. As she parted the curtains and paused for just an instant in the doorway with an air of diffidence, I was transfixed by her marvellous beauty, to which, as Deverell had said, the painted picture had done only partial justice. Tall, and with the figure and the manner of a goddess, I was fascinated by her eyes, deep blue and filled with sentiment and sympathy; eyes that could never be

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brutal but which must yearn for love and tenderness; not the eyes of a woman born to command, for there was a softness about them that was almost pleading, but of one created with a desire to be herself commanded and dominated by a stronger nature. Through them she looked at me as a child might look, but with more of understanding, yet as much of curiosity. Unconfined, her hair, when I saw it, would have swept the floor, but it was twisted into a great black, glistening crown; a little detail that made her appear more than ever the Queen.

Deverell started to introduce me but she interrupted him. “I already know Dr. Burnet,” she said, as she swept toward me with superb grace and infinite charm of manner and extended her hand, small and soft.

“And I feel that I already know you” was a blunder into which her eyes led me.

Instantly the look of animation which had come into her wonderful eyes gave way to one of sadness. “But I fear,” she said, “that the reports you have heard regarding me are very different from those I have had concerning you, and which caused me to want to meet you, that I might thank you for your kindness to Captain Deverell.”

I stumbled into another tactless reply: “I have

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only one fault to find with what I have been told. You should be known as 'The Beautiful White Angel.'" It was not a polite thing to say but I was hopelessly, almost heedlessly, in love, and it always has been my way to go straight at things.

Her answer, only through her eyes, that if I was not, in fact, a very ordinary individual I had made a very commonplace remark, so added to my embarrassment that we had talked about the weather and the sea for some time before I got back to my mooring and felt reasonably secure. Before breakfast was over we were getting along better, though I could not have concealed the admiration I did not express. At the end of the meal the Queen and I retired to the lounging room, Deverell going forward to look after the ship. His attitude toward her was one of devotion that amounted almost to homage, which she accepted as her right, and he spoke of and to her only as "Queen." Naturally, I addressed her in the same way, as that was the only name Deverell had used when he started to introduce me, and I then knew her by no other.

"We are headed for my retreat," she explained. "I want you to see it, and your visit there will give us an opportunity to get better acquainted. I should like to have you stay with us as long as you can. I will put

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you down in Hong Kong or Singapore on three or four days' notice.”

I assured her the prospect was delightful. With a bow and a smile that encouraged veritable loquacity she asked me to tell her all about myself, and she displayed so much interest in my different filibustering expeditions, and the adventures that grew out of them, that I gradually told her the whole story. When my recital brought me to the China Sea her interest became even more lively, as to details, but she displayed the same intimate knowledge of my movements, in a general way, that Deverell had shown.

In the course of the numerous long talks which followed, I felt that I was regaining some of the ground I had lost by my blunders in my first bewilderment, and though my infatuation grew stronger every time I was in her magnetic presence, which charged my whole being with the electrical energy of life at its best, I said not another word to her about it, on the ship. As we came to understand each other better she asked me to tell her all I had heard about her. I was surprised, but I knew she meant me to be perfectly frank with her, so I repeated, in a general way, the vague and vapory whisperings as to her wonderful beauty, on the one

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hand, and her alleged bloodthirstiness and wantonness on the other, which latter stories, I told her, could not be tolerated for an instant by any one who had ever seen her. She smiled bitterly.

"I never have cared what people said or thought of me," she said very slowly, "until recently. Far from enjoying the life I have been compelled to lead, I have suffered from it. It has been hard, and I have had to face and solve its problems alone. Craving friendship as flowers do the sun, and needing it as much, I have had to cut myself off from the world and try to make myself believe that I have neither heart nor conscience. When we get home I will tell you the story of my life, as you have told me yours."

On the afternoon of the third day out from Hong Kong we ran into a group of islands, off to the eastward of the regular course to Singapore. Just as dinner was announced a flag was waved from the bridge and, following Deverell's eyes, I made out an answering signal on the steep side of a small island just ahead of us. We were close inshore and I scanned the bank closely but could see no sign of either a landing or an opening. I was anxious to see what was to follow but a messenger brought word that the Queen was waiting dinner for me. Deverell did not dine with us but joined us as we were having

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coffee. The ship slowed down while we were at dinner and finally the screw stopped. Immediately the Queen led the way to the deck, where she had ordered coffee served.

"This," she said at the head of the stairway, "is my kingdom — without a king. Is n't it beautiful?"

I was a little in doubt as to whether her inquiry related to the scenery or the absence of a male ruler, but, without being able to distinguish clearly in the gathering tropic darkness, I assured her that it was the most beautiful place I had ever seen, wherein, when day dawned, I found I had not exaggerated. We were at the head of an oval lake, perhaps a mile and a half long, with mountains, whose ascent began close to the shore, rising crescent-shaped around it. There was a small village, composed of English cottages and native huts, at the end of the lake nearest to us. On three sides of the lake was a narrow beach, which widened at the village; the fourth side, toward the sea, was a perpendicular bluff, sixty feet or more high. I searched it for the passage through which we had entered the lake but nothing could I see but a bare wall of dark rock. The Queen watched me as I studied the situation and smiled at my perplexity. "Wait until to-morrow," she laughed. "It would never do to let you into all of our secrets at

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once. You had best retire early, for we will go ashore at sunrise," and she disappeared.

While we had been talking the topmasts were lowered, which I did not quite understand, and the fires drawn, and soon I was alone on deck, with a solitary watchman forward. There was no moon but under the soft light of the stars, low-hung and with a brilliancy seen only at or near the equator, I sat in silent wonder and admiration for hours. I was up again before it was full daylight and watched the lowering of the Queen's launch. She appeared with the sun, accompanied by a Dyak woman whom I had not seen before, and we landed at a little stone dock in front of the village. All of the inhabitants, consisting of about fifty English and Scotch men and women, some with silvered locks and bent backs, and some of them crippled by the pirates, and nearly as many natives, crowded the pier to meet her, their manner one of the greatest affection and deference. We walked through the village, which was a model of neatness, and on up a winding path for nearly a mile, when a sharp turn around a flank of the mountain brought us to a large bungalow—the palace of the Queen. It was so situated that it could not be seen from the sea, at any point, but just around the turn and not fifty yards from the house was a deep shad-

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owed bower from which there was a clear view of the ocean for two-thirds of the way around the compass. This was the outside sitting-room of the Queen and here breakfast was served. While it was being prepared she made herself more beautiful by changing her dress of European style for a native costume of flowing silk so becoming that I wondered at her ever wearing anything else.

After breakfast she looked down at the little town and far out to sea in silence for a long time, and then told me the story of her life. Her name, she said, was Katherine Crofton. Her father was one of the younger branches of a family which was headed by a Baron. The family crest was a sheaf of wheat and the motto “God grants the increase.” Her branch of the family had lived in the south of Ireland for several generations. Another branch had long lived at Derry Willow in the County Leitrim. Her father was a lieutenant commander in the British Navy and to prevent an accident he disobeyed the order of an incompetent and arrogant superior officer. In a quarrel that followed her father knocked his superior down and otherwise abused him, for which he was court-martialled and dismissed.

“My father was a high-spirited man,” she continued, “and his disgrace embittered him against

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England and everything English. He soon left home, without saying where he was going, and when we next heard from him he was in Hong Kong. He corresponded with us regularly after that and in three or four years, when I was about fifteen, he wrote mother and me to take a P & O ship for Singapore, where we would find further instructions. When we got there father was waiting for us on a handsome yacht, the 'Queen,' which is the ship that you have heard so much about. I am still using her. He brought us to this island, which he had fitted out as a retreat. He had established a small settlement down on the lake and built a warehouse in which to store his goods, and a machine shop to facilitate repairs to his ship. He had taken great pains and put himself to a large expense to make his rendezvous secure from intrusion or discovery.

"Evidently this lake is in the crater of an old volcano which, when it subsided, left a high, narrow barrier between it and its old enemy, the sea. Down there," pointing to the end of the lake opposite the village, "was a narrow opening into the lake, with a deep channel leading straight out to sea, though on both sides of it are rocks and shoals. Probably it was a fissure created by the volcano; anyway it served my father's purpose perfectly. He had the opening

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closed up with rocks until it was just wide enough to admit the ‘Queen.’ The ridge there, you can see, is not more than thirty-five or forty feet high, so the partial closing of the gap was really not such a difficult task. Then he fitted into the opening that was left, a great double gate, which rolls back and forth, instead of opening outward, and though it weighs many tons its mechanism is so arranged that four men can operate it. The gate is strong enough to stand any storm but to avoid straining it we keep it open in heavy weather, unless ships are hovering about. From a watch tower on top of the mountain behind us we get a clear view of the sea in all directions, and a man is always on duty there. The ridge that cuts off the ocean rises toward the upper end of the lake and the village is entirely hidden behind it, as is the ‘Queen’ when her topmasts are housed. The island, as you can see, is very small and from the sea there is not a sign to indicate that it is inhabited. When the gate at the opening into the lake is closed it cannot be distinguished at a distance of an eighth of a mile, for it exactly resembles the rocks on both sides of it, but the channel which leads to it is known to no one save us and no other ship would dare to venture within a mile and a half of the shore on account of the rocks.

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"I did not understand at first the meaning of all of these precautions, or some other things. Father went out on frequent voyages and returned with more or less cargo, which was placed in the warehouse, until it was full. Then father would change the appearance of his ship so that no one would know her and take cargoes out and sell them, until the warehouse was empty again. He always took mother and me along on these trips, though never on the others, and young as I was I learned much about navigation, for I had his love for the sea. On these trips we brought back books and magazines and so were able to keep a little in touch with the outside world.

"When I was not much older than nineteen father and mother were taken desperately ill and, believing that he would not recover, he called me into his room and made a confession. He said that in his hatred of the British he had turned pirate and had been for all those years preying on ships flying the flag he despised. He had also, occasionally, waged war on the native pirates and taken their loot from them, which explained why he had frequently come in with wounded men on board. He told me of how he had suffered from the act of injustice which expelled him from the navy and in the end he made me swear that if he died I would continue the work he had begun.

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He told me I could rely on Frank Deverell, his chief officer, whom he said he hoped I would some day marry,” — this last with just a trace of sarcasm. “My father died the next week and my mother three months later.

“That was four years ago. I have kept the oath which my love for my father prompted me to take, but the fulfilment of it has brought me increasing misery. My attacks on the British flag have been few — in fact I have given timely assistance to many more English ships than I have robbed, and hundreds of their passengers and sailors owe their lives to me, but I have preyed on the natural pirates of these waters as ardently, perhaps, as did my father. Yet I have no greater moral right to take from them what they have stolen than I have to rob a British or an American ship, nor can I excuse myself for the loss of life that goes with my attacks on them. I am much better armed than they are and it is nothing but cowardice, as well as thievery, for me to make war on them. I am, in fact, no better than they are, for I am in the same class with them — a pirate. My conscience has troubled me more and more until it has sickened me with the whole wretched business. A bad promise is better broken than kept; an oath is no more than a promise; and I am about ready to

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quit all of this robbery and butchery and try to return to decency and civilization. As to the other stories you have heard about me—they are simply lies.”

Toward the end she spoke rapidly and passionately and when she finished she was all a-quiver, and her eyes filled with tears. After a long pause, during which she regained control of herself, she said:

“Now, Captain, I have told you all. I am partly justified, if such a vow as mine can be pleaded as justification, but why are you in this business?”

Her sudden inquiry, following her bitter denunciation of pirates and those who preyed on them, surprised and embarrassed me. I told her that I was in it only because of the adventure of it; that I had been attracted to the China Sea by Norton’s stories, and that once there I had naturally fallen in with the exciting life and become a part of it; and that all of my fighting blood was aroused and my soul glorified by the fact that the great pirate chief had sworn to crush me.

“That is not a sufficient excuse,” she replied, promptly and decisively. “I had some reason for my actions, but you have none.” A moment later she added, gently: “I did not mean to pass judgment on you, for I have no right to do that. We must all be governed by our own consciences.”

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Neither one of us cared to continue the conversation and I was glad when she suggested that she would have a servant show me to a smaller bungalow, a short distance away, where I was to stay, though taking my meals at the “palace.” She advised a walk through the village and around the lake during the forenoon, and said we would walk toward the top of the mountain after lunch. I looked over my comfortable quarters and then walked back to the lake and went in a boat, with Deverell and Fennell, the “Queen’s” second officer, to the entrance, in which I was much interested. I found it to be just as it had been described. There were two gates, one on each side, about twenty-five feet high, above low water, and fifteen feet wide. They ran on small wheels in grooves cut in the solid rock and had been put in place, evidently, by building a cofferdam around the entrance. Below the water line they were built of heavy iron lattice work, so as to give the tides free ingress and egress. Above the water they were constructed of thick timbers, covered on the seaward side with iron plates. When they were open they ran back into nests cut into granite rock. When they were closed they came together diagonally, in the shape of a wide V, with the apex facing outward, so that the action of the waves only locked them more

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firmly. It was possible for two men to operate each gate, though six made quicker work of it. Their construction was as fine a piece of elusive engineering as I have ever seen. Their height was so arranged that there was no break in the coast line and they were, as the Queen had said, indistinguishable at a very short distance. There was just room enough over the sill to admit the "Queen" at low tide, and a larger ship could not have gotten through the gates or over the bar.

I told Deverell enough to make him understand, without my saying so, that the Queen had told me her life story, and, knowing this, he talked quite freely. From what he said I satisfied myself that not only had the elder Crofton been an out-and-out pirate but his bewitching daughter had done honor to his name, for two or three years at least. We visited the machine shop, which was quite elaborately fitted up for the repair of ship and guns, and walked through the village, where he pointed out men who had lost arms or legs in the service of the Queen and her father, and others who had been retired for age and were now pensioners. Deverell was a true pirate and told me with delight of some of their exploits. His reverence for the Queen amounted to idolatry. If his love for her had been returned I would not have been

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surprised for, though lacking some of the finer instincts of a gentleman, as could well be imagined from his surroundings for years, he was an unusually likable chap and of a type that ordinarily appeals strongly to women. He was about forty years old, two inches less than six feet tall, and had the figure of an Apollo. His steel gray eyes sparkled with friendship or shot sparks, and his brown hair fairly bristled when he was angry. He impressed one as being altogether a man, the soul of loyalty, a perfect friend, and brave to the last drop of his blood.

After luncheon the Queen and I set off toward the mountain top, nearly one thousand feet above us, but we did not reach it, for the heat was intense.

“Well, what do you think of us now?” she asked, on our way down, after I had told her how I had spent the forenoon.

“I think enough of you to devote my whole life to your service,” I quickly replied.

She gave me a long, searching look, that seemed to go right through me and lay my whole soul open before her, then took the lead and, without a word, walked rapidly on to her bungalow, and I walked on to mine.

When I came back to dinner she was waiting for me in her bower. As she came to meet me and

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extended her hand she said, earnestly and almost sadly, "I believe you were honest and sincere in what you said this afternoon, but I can only say 'Thank you.' What you suggested is impossible."

In the three weeks that followed I urged my love upon her with all of my determination but she refused to change her decision and apparently was as firm in it as at first. It was agreed that we should both give up piracy, in any form, but all of our arguments ended there until finally, one afternoon as we sat looking out over the sea and talking, for once, of the ordinary affairs of life, she said, slowly and emphatically, "Deverell was my father's right-hand-man. I am going to give this place to him, just as it stands, take the next ship for England, lay my case before the Home Secretary and ask him for a full pardon. I will confess to him that I have taken from the pirates what they had stolen from others. To offset the offence I have hundreds of written statements from people whose lives I have saved from the pirates by coming up in the nick of time, for which service I never accepted payment of any kind. I believe I can secure a pardon and if I do, I will meet you, with a clear conscience, and become your wife."

In a tumult of joy, which came over me with the force of an electric shock, I sprang to her side and

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started to take her in my arms, but she stretched out her hand and held me off. I had never seen such a serious look on her exquisite face and there were tears in her eyes.

“Not yet,” she said, tenderly but firmly. “I have said I would marry you only when my name had been cleared of its dishonor, and until that condition has been complied with you cannot regard me as your promised wife. After that you may do with me as you please, but not until then.”

Her accession of conscience had been so great that she considered herself disgraced, and that nothing short of a pardon from the British Government, so bitterly hated by her father, could restore her respectability. With my most persuasive arguments I tried to dissuade her from going to England, but without effect. I urged her to marry me at once and go with me to America or some other country, where we would not be reminded of the past and have nothing to fear from it, but she would not listen. She feared she would be found and arrested later on and bring dishonor on me; she seemed to have no thought of herself in that respect, and, seeing that, I better understood the depth of her great love.

No argument of mine could change her and there was nothing to do but fall in with her plan. She

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packed up the most treasured of her personal effects, paid a last visit to the graves of her father and mother, and two days later we sailed away. Just before going on board she summoned the villagers to the empty warehouse and told them she had given all of her property to Deverell and was going away, never to return. They wept and showed great distress, but Kate was quietly happy and her glorious eyes were firm and undimmed as they looked for the last time on her beauteous isle.

I knew about where to find the "Florence." We picked her up in a few days and I boarded her and made sail to meet the "Leckwith" at the rendezvous. Kate went on to Singapore, where she took the next ship for England. Six months later I received word that she had died suddenly there, before she had applied for a pardon, and the course of my life was changed again.

CHAPTER IX

A DEATH DUEL WITH A PIRATE KING

WHEN I rejoined the "Leckwith," after having started the Beautiful White Devil, who was a devil no longer but the one woman in the world for me, on her way to England to secure a pardon for her piracies which would open the way to our marriage, Frank Norton was very inquisitive as to where I had been and the reason for my sudden disappearance from Hong Kong. He had of course heard from Ah Fen of the woman pirate, who was mistakenly blamed by the real pirates for some of our raids on them, while we were held responsible for some of hers, and I could see that his keen mind had conceived the suspicion that it was her ship whose commander I had attended, in my capacity as a surgeon, after our joint fight with the Malays on the deck of the British bark, and that she was at the bottom of my absence, but I declined to discuss the matter at all or give him any information on the subject. I told him simply that I had been away on strictly private business. With even my most intimate friends I am naturally secretive regarding my purely

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personal affairs, and the "Beautiful White Angel," as I now knew her to be, had become so sacred in my enraptured vision that I did not wish to talk about her with any one, and least of all with the cynical Norton. I knew he would base his estimate of her on her altogether undeserved reputation among people who had never seen her, and that he would say something which would make me want to kill him. There really was no need for that sort of a finale to our semi-partnership, so I remained silent. Norton was annoyed by my refusal to take him into my confidence and went away in a huff, but he was astounded, a day or two later, when I told him I had decided to sell the "Florence" and "Surprise," divide up the profits with him, and quit the business we were in.

"What is the matter?" he asked in amazement. "Have you lost your mind?"

"On the contrary," I replied, "I have only just come into my right mind."

"But look at the money we are making," he protested. "Is there any other place where you can make as much money so easily?"

"There is nobody who gets more satisfaction out of money than I do," I said, "but after all it is n't the

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only thing in the world. I came out here for the adventure more than for the money."

"Well, isn't the supply of adventure equal to the demand?" he asked with a tinge of sarcasm.

"Not of the kind that appeals to me. There is plenty of excitement, of a kind, but not an awful lot of adventure, as I understand the term. Most of the time it is nothing more than wholesale butchery of ignorant Malays and Chinkies who have no chance against us even though they do outnumber us. And to make it worse, we steal from them. That is not the kind of adventure that I enjoy."

This sort of talk from me must have sounded very strange and I was not surprised at Norton's dumb-founded expression.

"But we only take from them what they have stolen from somebody else," he argued. "They have no right to it, while we can reasonably claim it as a reward for avenging those whom they have killed and robbed. Besides that, we ought to get a medal from the British Government for every one of those devils we put out of the way, for we are doing the world a service."

"That is no argument," I contended, remembering Miss Crofton's curt reproval of my own defence to her, along just the same line, only a month before.

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"The fact that they steal from others gives us no shadow of right to steal from them. Perhaps it is a good thing to kill them, but I hold no commission and draw no salary for that sort of thing. If the world wants them put out of the way, let the world attend to it. The world has never done anything for me that should make me want to assume the whole contract. If it is a public service to slay pirates, I have certainly killed my share, and directed the slaughter of enough more of them to absolve all of my most distant relatives from any further responsibility in the matter. Somebody else can now step up and kill his share, and they can keep it going as long as they like. I am sick of murdering and robbing, even though they are pirates, and there will be no more of it from my ships."

"What do you know about this 'Beautiful White Devil' Ah Fen has been telling me about?" he shot at me. He evidently expected to catch me off my guard, but I was looking for just such an inquiry and was not at all perturbed.

"There is no such person," I answered with perfect truthfulness. "I satisfied myself on that point while I was in Hong Kong. That is only one of the wild stories you hear out here where there are so many people who smoke opium. There may be a man

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pirate who sometimes masquerades in female attire, but there is no woman pirate."

"It may be," he suggested sneeringly, "that this sudden decision of yours to retire is due to the fact that Moy Sen has threatened to exterminate us. If you don't want to fight the old scoundrel, why don't you say so, instead of backing out on an assumption of morality that does not harmonize with your make-up and with which it is far beyond me to agree."

That dart struck a tender spot. I would be the last one to quit under a threat or under fire, and Norton knew it. The prospect of a rattling final fight was most alluring. Fighting pirates, I reasoned with myself, especially when they had declared war on you, was altogether different from preying on them, which I had given my word I would not do. It would be at least six or eight months before my beloved Kate could secure her pardon and meet me in Bombay, where we had planned to be married, and that, I figured, would give me time to accept the "defi" of the King of the Pirates, if he moved as rapidly as we might expect.

"Far from running away from a fight of that kind," I told Norton, "I should much rather run into it. We will cruise around a while to see whether the Chinkies really mean to give us battle. But it is

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the sport of it that I want and nothing else, for if it comes off it will be a great fight. There must be no more looting."

Norton apparently considered that he had shaken my decision to quit preying on the pirates, wherein he was mistaken, and hoped to be able to induce me to abandon it entirely. At any rate we were of one mind in hunting for a scrap with the Chinkies, just for the fun of it, and harmony was restored.

We loafed around in the path of the pirates below Great Natuna Island but nothing happened for ten days or two weeks and it began to look as though they were not seeking us very earnestly. We saw several junks which we could easily have stood up and robbed, but I would not permit it. Late one evening, just as the galloping night was closing in, an enormous junk appeared suddenly from behind an island and came sailing down a narrow strait through which we were just crawling. Instead of hurrying along through the dangerous passage, as she would have done had she been an honest trader, she began to shorten sail after she had passed us. That aroused our suspicions and we determined to look her over. She appeared to carry only a small crew, but when we came together it seemed to me for a moment that she had more Chinamen on board

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than I had ever seen before at one time. We increased our speed a little and drew up alongside to get a good look at her. We were almost on an even keel with her when she swung suddenly to starboard and would have smashed into our bow if we had not gone full speed astern without losing a second. As she passed under our short bowsprit she threw a grappling iron which caught on our port bow, and we let it stay there.

We lit our battle lamps and hung them along under the rail so that they illuminated our deck, where we preferred to fight, because we knew every foot of it. We had about one hundred and twenty-five men on the "Leckwith," Norton having taken the pick of the crews of the "Florence" and "Surprise," while I was away, in order to be prepared for any contingency, and I had no fear that the pirates could come aboard fast enough to get away with us. The junk's grappling iron held and as soon as she was clear of us we went ahead slowly. This drew the two ships together, which was what we wanted. As the junk swung around we let go our carronades, but we were at such close quarters that the slugs did not have time to scatter and simply ploughed small holes through the mass of men that swarmed her decks. We gave them a volley of rifle fire and met them with

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another as the ships came together. They rushed over the rail at us in a sulphur cloud. Then it was revolvers and cutlasses. The pirates resorted to their old trick of throwing themselves on the deck, as though killed or wounded, and trying to hamstring or disembowel us, but we were up to that game and were watching for it. We made sure that every Chinaman was dead when he struck the deck. Every blow was that of an executioner. In a few minutes, as it seemed then, though it may have been much longer, the decks were slippery with blood and I could actually hear it dripping through the scuppers into the quiet sea.

It was such a fight as one gets into only in years, perhaps only once in a lifetime. The butchery was dreadful but the excitement of it set one's blood ablaze. Our men became demons. As they shot and slashed they shouted and sang. A disarmed Chinkie seized me around the waist and dragged me in among his blood-stained fellows, but we were so closely wedged together that they could not chop at me without striking each other and they never thought of stabbing me. Norton and the mighty Lorensen, swinging an enormous Chinese sword which he had taken from one of his victims, came to my assistance and in a twinkling I was free, with dead and maimed

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pirates piled up around me in a circle. I could feel sword cuts now and then but they seemed like pin pricks. All of us were so covered with blood that there was no telling whether it came from our own wounds or those we had inflicted.

"That makes us even," I shouted to Lorensen, as I cut down a yellow devil who had crept up behind him, while he was busy with those in front, and had his knife raised to put him out of commission. A Chinkie who had lost his sword seized my empty pistol from its holster, pressed it over my heart and pulled the trigger. I let him go that far and then laughed at him as I backed away and cut his head half off. I saw Norton go down and fought my way to him, to find that he had only slipped in a red pool. He had been singing a loud requiem of profane abuse over those who met his sword and he resumed it where he had left off, hardly missing a note. We kept the pirates in front of us and steadily forced our way forward. Every time one of our own men fell it made us fight the harder. The Chinkies cut and slashed with all of their desperate savagery but it was impossible for them to stand before the fury of our men and, though they outnumbered us four or five to one, they finally began to give way. We followed them onto their own deck and piled them up

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on top of each other. Finally a lot of them took to the hold and the rest, perhaps a hundred of them, jumped overboard. Those that foolishly fled to the hold we treated to a dose of their own medicine. We threw their stink-pots down among them until the air was thick with the poisonous smoke, and closed the hatches. Some of them, gasping and blinded, tried to escape through the guarded gangways; the rest of them died in the hold. There was not a pirate left alive on the junk or on our own deck.

We looked upon our work and pronounced it good, but before we had time to congratulate ourselves or count noses to ascertain the extent to which we had suffered, we discovered a big steamer almost on top of us. It was the "Ly-ce-moon," the flagship of Moy Sen's fleet, and, though we did not know it, the old pirate chief himself was in command of her. We barely had time to refill our revolvers and get back onto the "Leckwith," when she banged into us and made fast with her grapples. She was nearly twice the size of the "Leckwith" and her rail was three or four feet above ours. We did not know how many men she carried nor did any of us care, for we were mad with monotonous murder; the bestial blood lust that comes from a glut of human butchery was over all of us. We were both exhilarated and enraged;

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stimulated by the quick work we had made of the junk, and furious at the revelation of the cunning trap that had been set for us. The junk was the bait. It was expected that we would attack and board her; that our boarding force would be overwhelmed by the hundreds of devils who were crammed into her hold, and while this fight was on the "Ly-ce-moon" was to come up on the other side and finish us off. It was shrewdly planned and if we had not been on our guard and suspicious of everything, we would have fallen into the trap, and delayed matters so long that when it came we would have had a fight on our hands which it would have been hard to win. As I reasoned it out, when we ranged alongside of the junk to size her up more closely, as soon as she came up with us, her commander, naturally thinking we were preparing to attack him, decided that the cunning thing for him to do was to throw his horde aboard of us instead of waiting for us to board him. He supposed we carried only our ordinary crew, as all of our extra men were out of sight, and figured that it would be an easy game for him, in which he stood to win a lot of glory with no chance of losing; for even if we should develop unexpected strength, the steamer would come up in time to make our defeat certain. Nothing but this turn of affairs, which

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was not according to the programme, and the fury with which our augmented crew went at the Chinkies, made it possible for us to render the junk entirely harmless before Moy Sen arrived.

When he threw his grappling irons we made them fast and, before he had time to think, or to see all that had happened, we were scrambling over his high sides, each man armed with a revolver in one hand and a cutlass in the other. The Chinaman, even when he is a pirate, has no rapid resourcefulness. When you "switch the cut" on him, or do anything in a different way from that in which he expects you to do it, he has to stop and figure it out and fix himself all over again. Moy Sen's crew were prepared to board us, and when we made the offensive our defensive, and carried the fight to them with an altogether unexpected rush, they were so taken by surprise that they offered little real resistance to our invasion. But by the time we were all on board they had regained their senses and the fight that followed was even more savage than the one before it. There were no lights, except those under the "Leckwith's" rail, which did us little good, and the pirates fired at us from hiding places about their well-known decks, which we could not make out until our eyes had become accustomed to the dark-

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ness. Our men shot and, when their revolvers were empty, slashed at every noise. In order that we might not attack each other we kept up a contemptuous chant of curses on the Chinese, counting time to it with our cutlasses.

The result was a repetition of what had occurred with the crew of the junk, but it required much longer to accomplish it. The junk had carried more men than the steamer, for it was planned that those on the junk were to do the brunt of the fighting and get us going before the others came at us from behind; but the first battle was fought on a well-lighted deck with every foot of which we were familiar, while the second struggle took place on a strange ship and in semi-darkness, which was lightened only by the lamps on our own ship below us and a few stars above, for the sky was overcast with clouds.

We strung our forces along the full length of the "Ly-ce-moon," to prevent the pirates from getting behind us, and fought our way crosswise of the ship. One of the first things that caught my eye was the figure of a gigantic Chinaman in the after part of the vessel, who at first directed the fight and then took a large hand in it himself. It was, as I suspected at the time from the manner in which he had been described to me by Ah Fen, old Moy Sen him-

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self, who had paid us the high honor of taking personal charge of the campaign against us. He was the biggest Chinaman I had ever seen and must have been a full-blooded Tartar. He was raw-boned and his face, of which I now and then caught a glimpse, was that of a fiend. He had tremendously long arms and every time he swung his sword he cleared a space. Lorensen and I, who were close together while Norton was farther forward, tried to fight our way to him, but we were held back by important business directly in front of us that demanded immediate attention. By the time we succeeded in working our way aft, the chief of all the pirates had disappeared.

Made more desperate by the annihilation of their comrades on the junk and inspired by the presence of their great leader, and his commanding and defiant shouts, the Chinkies fought with a grim stubbornness which I had never before seen them display. They made no noise about it but kept chopping away, sometimes aimlessly, but always chopping. The scent of veritable rivers of blood would have sickened us, and our tired arms, like those of our enemies, would have settled into a methodical swing, had we not been spurred on by one victory and the prospect of a still greater one. My sword was

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broken off at the hilt in warding off a vicious blow, but before another one could be struck I seized a fortunately falling Chinkie and held him in front of me, while his blood gushed all over me, until I had secured his sword, which I used as effectively as my own. In trying to hamstring me a half-dead pirate gashed the calf of my leg to the bone, yet I scarcely noticed it. I felt something trickling down my face and knew a glancing blow had laid open my scalp, but there was no twinge of pain. It was the same with all of the others. No one thought of his wounds unless he was disabled, when, if he had strength enough, he dragged himself to the rear to be out of the way. Nothing was in our minds but to fight and win. Had there been twice as many of the pirates the result, in the end, would have been the same, for it was not in us to be defeated that night. Gradually, but slowly at first, we got the upper hand of them. When the inspiring voice of their chief was silenced they gave way more rapidly and our men chased them over the side and rushed into cabins, deckhouses, for'c'sle, engine room, and stokehole, hunting out those who had sought hiding places, and putting an end to the continued danger of pot shots.

It was broad daylight by the time we had thrown overboard the last of the dead Chinamen and washed

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down the decks, after giving our own badly wounded men such attention as was possible under the conditions. We thought for a time that Moy Sen had escaped, but we found him, almost chopped to pieces, close to the after wheelhouse, with three of our men dead beside him. Except for his great size we would not have known him, but he was identified by Ah Fen, who was the only one on board who had ever seen him. We had twenty-one men killed and twice as many so seriously injured that a number of them subsequently died, and there was hardly a man of us who did not have one or more wounds of some kind. In addition to the cut on my leg, which was a nasty one and barely missed the tendons, and the scalp wound, which was not a severe one, I had a dozen cuts and gashes of assorted sizes and widely distributed. The point of a sword had ripped open my already scarred cheek and another one had taken away a souvenir from my arm. Norton had a long cut along his abdomen, which almost accomplished the intended disembowelment, and half of one ear was hanging by the skin. He also had many minor injuries, but neither of us was damaged beyond speedy repair. Lorensen, a mighty man in any position, who had sent as many Chinamen to join Con-

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fucius as had any of us, was one of the very few who escaped with only trifling scratches.

On the "Ly-ce-moon" were two teak chests, filled with gold and silver coin and ingots, silverware, jewelry, and precious and semi-precious stones, of the Oriental variety, apparently representing the most valuable portions of several stolen cargoes, and these I allowed to be transferred to the "Leckwith," in preference to throwing them overboard. It then became a question as to what we should do with Moy Sen's ships. There was some apprehension that if we took them with us we might run into a cruiser and be unable satisfactorily to explain exactly how we came into possession of them and what we were doing with such a large crew on a private yacht. We compromised the difficulty by scuttling the junk and putting a crew aboard the steamer. We went to Singapore, arriving there in the early Summer of 1876, as I remember it, to close up our business, and sold the pirate ship to our Chinese agents for a third of what she was worth. We also sold to them, for a small part of its value, the loot we had taken from her, but all of that money was divided up between Norton and the crew. I held to my promise and touched none of it. We retained about twenty-five of our best men, paid the others off, after dividing

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up a large share of our profits with all of them, placed the injured in a hospital, and headed for Hong Kong, where the "Florence" and "Surprise" had been ordered to report. On the way we stopped at a small, cut-of-the-way island, landed all of our guns and most of our small arms, and, after covering them well with red lead and tallow, buried them in a deep hole, over which we planted a lot of young cocoanut trees. The "Leckwith" then became, in fact, a private yacht. We had no anxiety regarding our old friends, the pirates, for there was nothing we could not run away from.

It was fortunate that we removed all traces of piracy and restored the "Leckwith" to an honest vessel for as soon as we reached Hong Kong we were boarded and inspected with great care. It transpired that while I was away with Miss Crofton, Norton had landed at a little village a hundred and fifty miles down the coast and played hob with it. I knew nothing about it until after we were examined, when Lorensen told me about it. Norton's excuse was that he believed the village was inhabited only by pirates and he wanted to teach them a lesson, but there was no doubt in my mind that he had hoped to find a lot of loot there. The "Leckwith," naturally, answered the descriptions of

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the ship that made the raid, and if we had not been nicely cleaned up when the officers came aboard, we undoubtedly would have been arrested for piracy, instead of which we were absolved from all suspicion.

The "Florence" was waiting for us and I at once disposed of her, through our agents, to an English trading company. In a few weeks the "Surprise" came in from Yokohama, where she had delivered a cargo, and was sold to a Japanese house with a branch in Hong Kong. I remember that she brought seven thousand pounds, which I gave to Norton. We paid off their crews, with a bonus and their share of the profits, and saw that they were scattered and shipped on long voyages in different directions, as we had done with the surplus crew of the "Leckwith." We had no fear that they would carelessly tell what they knew about our operations, for they were pleased with their treatment and, beyond that, self-protection would have stood in the way of any complaint against us, but we considered it wise to distribute them to the four corners of the earth before they had an opportunity to fill up with rum and become braggarts, wherein would be danger to all of us. The two captains, Brown and Heather, had fallen under the spell of the China Sea, with its dangers and its delights, and were in no hurry to

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leave it for prosaic England, but we knew they could be relied on; if they had not been discreet and close-mouthed I never would have engaged them. I had been out East about two years and considered that the adventures I had encountered there amply repaid me for the time, to say nothing of the joy I had found in establishing the identity of the Beautiful White Devil as a real, live being, and falling in love with her. Therefore I insisted on treating all of our men with a liberality that amounted to prodigality, but even after that Norton and I divided up something over three hundred thousand dollars, as the remaining share of what we had cleaned up from the pirates.

We loafed around Hong Kong for weeks, for it had been arranged that Miss Crofton should communicate with me there as to the probable result of her effort to secure a pardon after the confession she intended to make to the Home Secretary. Finally the word came, and it was a great shock to me, for it was a report of her death, which occurred suddenly at her old home in Ireland, soon after she arrived there on her way to London. I had been in love before, more times than once, but never so much as with her. For her I was ready to give up my adventurous life, but the knowledge that she

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was gone from me made me more desperate than ever. I was tempted to resume the old piratical life, yet I could not bear to remain amid scenes that would constantly remind me of her. So I left the China Sea behind me and never have returned to it.

On receipt of the heart-breaking news I told Norton the whole story of how I became acquainted with the beautiful Miss Crofton and fell in love with her, and how my romance had been shattered. I told him he could stay there if he wanted to, and return to the old life if he wished, but that I intended to leave at once and for all time. He declared he would go with me, and suggested that we take a trip to Australia; but I was moody and wanted to cruise around a bit, in the solitude of the open sea, with no definite object in view. We headed up along the coast and Norton, who was looking after the navigation of the ship, in which I had lost all interest for the time being, put in at Amoy, for want of something better to do. He thought a visit to a strange port might do me good. While we were lying there Norton became acquainted with a Chinese or Korean merchant. He was anxious to get up to the Shantung Peninsula, where the Germans were beginning to establish themselves firmly with the idea of taking possession of that rich section of China when

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the Empire was divided up among the "friendly" powers, so called because they were altogether unfriendly, and Norton proposed that we continue our indefinite journey that far and take him along. I agreed, thinking we might find something interesting in new scenes. When we got nearly up to the Peninsula Norton unfolded a new scheme. Our merchant passenger, he said, had told him of a lot of treasure buried in a cemetery in Corea, close to a river and not a great way from the coast, which was guarded only by the superstitious native fear of the dead. It would be an easy matter to secure the treasure, according to his story, and he offered to lead us to it if we would give him a share of it. By that time I was in a frame of mind to welcome any excitement and I told Norton to close with him and go ahead.

Accordingly we altered our course and sailed for the west coast of Corea. I do not know how far we followed it but we stopped at the mouth of a small river, which ran close to the cemetery, about twelve miles up. We went up to it at night in a steam launch we had bought at Hong Kong; Norton, the merchant, and I, and eight men. The cemetery, which was five hundred yards back from the river, was an open space of perhaps ten acres, filled with funny-

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looking graves, covered with signs and charms. In the centre of it was an unroofed structure about fifty feet square, with stone walls twelve or fifteen feet high. It was there, said our guide, that the money was concealed.

Just as we came to the edge of the burying ground a procession of twenty or twenty-five white-robed men, marching in Indian file and carrying a number of ladders, appeared on the opposite side. They marched to the square structure, raised their ladders against the wall and went over. In half an hour they climbed out again, with several large and heavy sacks which were lowered with some difficulty, took down their ladders and marched away in silence. Our guide explained, with many Chinese curses, that they doubtless were a delegation sent from Seoul after the treasure. Certainly they had taken something away with them and it probably was money. There was no telling whether it was gold, silver, or copper, for all our guide professed to know was that a "large amount" was hidden there. From the size and weight of the numerous sacks in which it was carried away I got the idea that the "treasure" consisted of the cheap "cash" used in that country and China and that the total value of it probably did not exceed a few hundred dollars at the most. Had it been made

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up of gold coin it would have represented the national wealth of Corea.

Some of the store might have been left behind, but I did not care to investigate. The outlook was not promising and the situation was uncanny to a degree that got on my already depressed nervous system; so, with some random remarks about Corean methods of burying their dead and hiding their money, we walked back to the launch and returned to the ship, without having derived even a reasonable amount of excitement from the trip. That fiasco finally fixed in me a resolution, that had been forming for some time, to get entirely away from that part of the world. We turned about and landed our disappointed passenger at Shanghai and from there took a course almost due south, which carried us east of the Philippine Islands, down through Molucca Pass, past the Island of Celebes, into the Florida Sea, and out through the Floris Strait into the Indian Ocean. Our final objective port was London, but I had no wish to make another trip through the China Sea and its islands at the south, which held so many painful memories, and took this roundabout course to avoid them.

CHAPTER X

THE BURIAL OF THE "LECKWITH"

ON my way back to England on the "Leckwith," along toward the end of the still sadly remembered year of 1876, after having said farewell to the China Sea, with its beauty, booty, and blood, we decided to go around by the Cape of Good Hope to look South Africa over a bit. By that time I was eager for anything that offered excitement and diversion, without regard to either the principles which were involved or the lack of them. I had brooded over the death of the Beautiful White Devil, for love of whom I was willing to give up my old ways and become a quiet and orderly person, until I had interpreted it to mean that the unseen and unknown directing force of my career had no sympathy with my reformatory resolutions and had taken that brutal way of making plain the command that I was to remain a homeless adventurer. The result was that my nature, for the time being, was as embittered as it had been exalted only a short time before, and my hand was raised against every one. Norton, my partner in this expedition, was delighted with the change

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that had come over me, and hailed with unconcealed joy what he regarded as my return to a normal frame of mind.

We put in at the Mauritius for coal and there we heard stories regarding the still flourishing slave trade which led us to believe we might find some spirited and profitable sport with them, in the same way that we had preyed on the Chinese and Malay pirates out East. We sailed around Cape St. Mary into the Mozambique Canal, between the East African coast and the island of Madagascar, and began bartering for ivory, gold dust, palm nuts, and animal skins, as a mask for our real purpose and to give us a favorable opportunity to study the situation. Investigation proved that we had been correctly advised regarding it. The Sultan of Zanzibar had practically suppressed the sale of slaves in his domain, but the only effect had been to drive the trade down the coast, and large numbers of negroes from the interior were being handled by the Arabs, who were born to the business. For the pick of the slaves there was a regular course down the White Nile and the Blue Nile and on across into Arabia, hitting the back trail on the path of Moses. The rest of the unfortunate victims of a civilization which makes might right were driven in long strings down to the coast, chiefly

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to Mozambique and to the delta of the Zambesi River, which was a favorite spot for barterings in blacks. The bulk of these slaves were intended for shipment across the channel to Madagascar, where there always was a demand for them among the old Hovas, or aristocrats, who owned the large plantations. The balance of them were sent to the Arabian coast for distribution. They were shipped to both markets in *dhow*s, low-lying vessels that, with a fair wind and comparatively smooth sea, could make almost steamship time. They need to be fast, for a British cruiser, on the lookout for just such ships, was continually patrolling the channel in the general course of a figure 8, and sometimes there were two or three of them on the watch. The Arabs kept close tab on the warships and knew about where they were at all times, except when they doubled on their course, which they sometimes did, with occasional disastrous results.

When the chocolate caravans reached the mouths of the Zambesi sales were held, both public and private, at which the slave-dealers bought from the slave-catchers as many negroes as they thought they could handle. The blacks were placed in pens or stockades and kept there until the coast was clear and a dhow ready to sail, when, chained together

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by the neck in batches of six, they were driven on board and stowed away under the hatches, from two hundred to four hundred constituting a ship-load. The average price of these slaves in Madagascar was one hundred dollars, but when, on account of the watchfulness of the warships, they had been kept long in the pens and were fat and strong, they brought considerably more,—sometimes twice as much.

In the guise of a peaceful trader, with nothing about us to arouse suspicion, we loafed along the slave coast until we had a good line on the manner in which the Arabs conducted their operations and knew the general routine of the movements of the watching warships. With a satisfactory understanding of the general situation we signed on, at Mozambique, seventy-five additional men, who were ready for any service, equipped ourselves with such paraphernalia as we required, and launched out into the business of snatching slaves. Our ordinary method was to cruise along the Madagascar coast until we sighted a dhow sailing along in a light breeze, or, better still, becalmed. We would just keep her in sight until nightfall. If she was becalmed we would close in on her, with our lights doused, until we were two or three miles away; if she was under slow way

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we would get the same distance in advance of her. Then we would lower five or six boats, each carrying ten or twelve well-armed men, and attack her from as many different directions. Norton or I always went along in command of the expedition. We tried to surprise the Arabs, and on some very dark nights we succeeded, but most frequently they surprised us by being prepared for our visit. There was always a fight and sometimes, with the larger dhows, a full-fledged battle. We could not use large guns without danger of killing the cargo, so it was altogether revolver and cutlass work on our side. The Arabs used long rifles with beautifully inlaid handles, which really were deadly weapons in spite of their fanciful appearance, and curved swords, in the use of which they were artists. They fought hard enough, viciously, in fact, but we generally had as many men as they carried, or more, and when we did not catch them napping we confused them by attacking them simultaneously at five or six points. We had a man killed now and then and had a number put out of commission with more or less serious wounds, but we suffered little in comparison with the damages we inflicted.

With the fight over we would transfer the Arabs to the "Leckwith," where we put them in irons or

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somewhere else, and place a crew on the dhow to navigate her to the coast and sell the slaves. Our attacks were always made close inshore to minimize the danger of being ourselves surprised and overhauled by a warship. We would follow the captured dhow in with the "Leckwith" and stand off and on two or three miles offshore, watching for interference and waiting for the transaction to be closed, when we would send boats in and pick up our crew, which invariably was in charge of Norton or I or Lorensen. The dhow was sold or presented to the purchaser of the slaves.

The activity was continuous, for we were always scurrying around in search of slaves, yet the excitement of it was not so thrilling as I had anticipated. We had been following this new, and I must admit somewhat revolting occupation only a few weeks when the crew of a small dhow set their ship on fire as we were closing in on it one night and took to the boats before a shot had been fired. By the time we got on board the whole afterpart of the vessel was in flames and we had all we could do to keep it from spreading forward far enough to reach the slaves, who were in a panic and were making the night melodious with the wildest yells I had ever heard. As soon as the blaze was made out from the "Leck-

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with," Norton brought her alongside and we succeeded in transferring all of the negroes to her, but with great difficulty, for they were almost helpless from fear and, chained together as they were, it was hard to handle them quickly. However, it was a small shipment, and all of our men who could be spared from fighting the fire eventually got them below decks on the "Leckwith," after which we let the dhow burn, and made fast time away from her for fear the flames would attract some passing ship. It was several days before we got rid of the slaves, for the first port we visited was overstocked, and in that time they filled the ship with an indescribable stench that it was impossible to eradicate, and in the end it proved her undoing.

One evening not long after that, just at dusk, as we came around Cape St. Andrew, we ran right into a British gunboat—I think it was the old "Penelope." She at once changed her course, came alongside and hailed us:

"What ship is that?"

"The 'Jane Meredith,' from Delagoa Bay to Suez," I shouted back, and I had the papers to prove it.

We were ordered to heave to and a lieutenant came aboard us. His manner, as he came over the

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rail, indicated that he was suspicious of us. He first examined our papers and passed them.

"You're damned light to be going north," he said, as he looked over the manifest, which showed only the small cargo of skins and palm nuts that we always carried.

"That's so," I admitted, "but we've been out East for three years and I'm anxious to get back to England. I came around this way thinking we might pick up a cargo, but there's not much doing."

"It looks as though there had been something doing," he exclaimed a few minutes later, when he saw the number of men we had on board. "What in thunder are you doing with so many men?"

"We had three ships out East," I explained. "I sold the others to the Japs. The crews did not want to stay with them. When they signed I agreed to return them to England, and I am taking them back myself, rather than pay their passage; that's all."

He looked skeptical, but asked no further questions along that line, except to inquire the names of the ships I had sold and their rig.

The moment he poked his nose in the hold and sniffed the air he turned on me and declared, with an air of finality, "You've been running slaves."

"Nothing like it," I replied, just as positively.

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"There were a lot of niggers at the Mauritius who wanted to get to Delagoa Bay and as we were going there I took them along, at two shillings a head. They grubbed themselves and most of them lived down here, as we were crowded above. If I had known they would stink the ship up so I wouldn't have carried them at any price."

"That's the regular slave smell," he insisted, apparently by no means convinced by my calm statement. "Your craft is n't fitted up as though you had to transport niggers to keep you in coal."

"I don't make a business of it," I told him, "but I've got to carry something besides two extra crews, or lose money."

Without continuing the argument, his silence adding to my apprehension, he went on over the ship and examined every foot of it. He found nothing to strengthen the suspicions I was convinced he had formed, but he had already seen, and smelled, enough to make me uncomfortable.

The moment the young officer's launch was clear of us we got under way at full speed. He had to row only a couple of hundred yards to the gunboat and we had not gone a mile before a shot was fired after us as a signal to heave to again. Evidently the commander of the warship, as soon as he heard

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the lieutenant's report, had decided to hold us on suspicion, but we had no idea of being held. It was dark by that time and, as we showed no lights, the gunboat could not pursue us, nor could she tell which way to shoot. We saw her lights trailing us for a while, but she soon gave up the chase.

I knew it would not do for us to run afoul of that gunboat, after that, or any other, for the word would be passed quickly along, and they would be on the lookout to pick us up. We became much more careful than we had been before, but in spite of our precautions, or perhaps because of them, things began to go against us. Not long afterward, while we were waiting on the outer edge of a bay a short distance south of Kitombo to pick up Norton and a party who had landed a cargo of slaves from a captured dhow, we had to run for it from a cruiser that happened along. Though she never got within range she gave us a long chase and it was a week before we considered it safe to go back after Norton and his men. The Arabs were increasing their crews and we had a succession of hard fights with them, in which we lost a number of men. Norton was half knocked out and, in addition to several minor injuries which I had accumulated, I had a bullet hole through the fleshy part of the arm that was giving me considerable

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trouble. And with it all we were constantly offended by the stench which those slaves had left in the hold, as though to haunt us.

I never have believed in overplaying my luck, and it required only a few setbacks to convince me that fortune had turned against us, so I decided to make another change. Preying on slavers was nasty business, anyway, though rich in profits, and I had had enough of it. I had become superstitious, too, about the sickening, odoriferous heritage which the slaves had left with us. We were likely to be recognized wherever we went, and that smell would convict us. Running slaves ranked with piracy and conviction, meant a two-step on air at the end of a yardarm, which was not a pleasing prospect. Therefore I determined to quit the business and bury all traces of it, including the "Leckwith." She had paid for herself many times over and I could afford to lose her. Besides, if I kept her she would continually remind me of my experiences in the China Sea, and those I was equally anxious to forget.

I paid off all of the extra men, giving them double wages and a share of the profits, and told them of my plans, so far as they were concerned. We had plenty of coal to take us as far as I intended to go and I did not care to put into any port for fear of

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being recognized. Therefore I told them we would take them to within twelve or fifteen miles of Zanzibar, where they would take to the boats and sail ashore. They could land quietly, and probably unnoticed, but if any questions were asked them they were to report that the ship had foundered. This plan was carried out and they were started landward with provisions and water.

We continued on our solemn journey until we came to a point about twenty miles off Aden, near the lower end of the Red Sea, and there we proceeded to bury the "Leckwith" and her ghost, the smell of the slaves. The funeral was conducted, early in the morning, with becoming ceremony and with sincere sorrow on the part of all of us. It is a terrifying thing to have a ship go down under you, even in a smooth sea and with the shore in sight, but it is a human tragedy to deliberately sink your own ship, and a long and intimate association, filled with dangers, such as mine had been with the "Leckwith," manifold the melancholy of it. I had thought I could send her down without great concern, inasmuch as it was necessary to protect her from capture and ourselves from arrest, but when the time came to do it I understood something of the feelings of the West-

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ern frontiersmen when they killed their wives to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Indians.

In the nearly ten years that I had been with her she had carried me safely through more dangers than fall to the life of the ordinary man, even though he be as ardent a lover of the sea and of adventure as I myself. No storm that blew had ever driven her to shelter or made her question the security she felt in my hands. In all sorts of weather, under sail or steam, she had carried me clear of every pursuing ship that challenged her speed. However rough the usage she never rebelled or complained; wherever I directed her she went as true and straight as an arrow, with never a misstep or a falter. If she had been disgraced it was because I had elected to dishonor her; no part of the blame was hers. She was not an inanimate, unfeeling thing conceived by man out of iron and steel, but a living, breathing, human creation, with all the passion and sympathy and devotion of a woman, and, as is the way of most mortals, I did not know my own love for her until I was about to lose her. I am not much given to weeping, but there were tears in my eyes as I gave the signal that stilled forever the steady pulsations of her great, true heart, and I could feel the death tremor running through her as she came to a stop.

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While a royal salute boomed from her yacht's gun forward I read over her the burial service at sea prescribed by the Church of England. Her own flag was sent to the maintop and the rest of her bunting was astream from stern to bowsprit, over the mastheads. Then, with the small boats forming a cortege alongside, we opened her seacocks, pulled a short distance away, and watched her slowly sink to her grave, tenderly lowered by her own mother, the sea. We had taken our revolvers along for that particular purpose, our protection being a secondary consideration, and as the waves that her broken heart had warmed caressed the topmost flag we fired another salute in her honor, as the final tribute of a love that, long smouldering and not understood, had been fanned into full flame by her burial, and she was gone. I owned many ships after that but never one among them was I so sure of, under all conditions, as I was of her.

The ocean whispered to itself of her brave deeds as it closed in over her and we hoisted rags of sails on our three boats and headed for Aden, where we landed late in the afternoon with a carefully prepared story of the sinking of an imaginary ship. Aden was a port of call for ships running out East and we took the next one that came in for England.

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We reached London early in 1877 where I learned with delight that war between Russia and Turkey was imminent. The first thing I did was to dissolve my partnership with Norton. While I had greatly enjoyed the adventures that were a part of it, I did not relish the business to which he had introduced me. I do not seek to avoid any responsibility for my own acts; I went into the business with my eyes open but it was not exactly the sort of thing I was cut out for, and it left a bad taste in my mouth. Moreover, I preferred to operate alone.

Norton joined his wife, who was living in Devonshire, and I went to the Langham Hotel, where I put myself in touch with my old agents and other dealers in contraband, for I hoped the coming war would produce some legitimate business. I was not disappointed, for very soon I was asked to meet the diplomatic agent of Montenegro, a little principality lying on the Adriatic between Turkey and Austria-Hungary, which was at that time subject to the Sublime Porte. It was cut off from the sea by a narrow military strip which was occupied by Austria. Cattaro, the natural seaport of Montenegro, was within this strip and was guarded by Austrian soldiers. The Montenegrin border was not more than a mile away, right at the top of the precipitous mountains that

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surround the little town, but the passage of arms across it was forbidden, and so strictly was this law enforced that people crossing from or into Montenegro were compelled to leave their rifles and even their revolvers with the guard at the frontier, until they returned. Everything that passed into Montenegro was subjected to close inspection by the Austrian troops, and it seemed to me, as I first studied the situation, that the delivery of a cargo of contraband to the little principality would present many unusual and interesting difficulties.

I met the diplomatic agent, by appointment, at the old Jerusalem Coffee House, near Corn Hill, and he showed me a commission from Prince Nicholas himself to establish his responsibility. He wanted me to deliver a cargo of arms at Cattaro for Montenegro and said he was willing to pay liberally but not extravagantly for the service, as the danger, to one skilled in the handling of contraband, would be slight. I inquired what he proposed to do with the arms after they reached Cattaro, as their importation into his country was forbidden, but he politely replied that that was something with which I need not concern myself, inasmuch as he could positively assure me that I need have no fear of having my ship seized at Cattaro or getting into trouble there. He told me

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the Montenegrins proposed to take advantage of the Russo-Turkish war, which was then certain, though it was not formally declared until April 27, to make a determined effort to throw off the Turkish yoke, and that the arms were urgently needed for that purpose. He said that if the Porte heard so much as a hint that they were buying arms I might be stopped by a Turkish ship; therefore the greatest secrecy must be maintained and I should be prepared with a full set of forged papers which would be so convincing that any Turk who might board my ship would be afraid to inspect the cargo for fear of offending England.

We came to terms without any difficulty, as I was anxious to get back into my own business, and, as I had no ship of my own, I chartered a small steamship for the voyage. The arms were shipped to Amsterdam, to conceal their real destination, and I picked them up there, after they had been repacked into cases weighing from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds. This was done so that they could be taken up the mountain-side from Cattaro on muleback without unpacking. There were about ten thousand rifles and a great quantity of ammunition. We encountered no inquisitive Turks and the trip was made without incident. Cattaro is buried at the head of the Bocche di Cattaro (mouths of Cattaro),

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a great S-shaped bay, and rare scenic views of impressive grandeur were opened up to us with every turn of the tortuous channel, as we wound our way through it. Bold, bluff mountains ran right down to the water's edge and off to the north were the high peaks of Herzegovina.

According to programme, we got up to Cattaro just at dusk and after the custom house had closed. As soon as we had made fast a Montenegrin official, who had been waiting for us, came aboard, paid me my charges in gold, and asked me to get the cargo out as quickly as possible. With the appearance of the first boxes a long string of pack ponies came trotting down the dock, and as fast as they were brought up from the hold the boxes were placed on their waiting backs and hustled off up the mountain-side. By daylight the whole cargo was across the frontier, or close to it. I could not but feel that I was taking some chance in letting it go so unceremoniously, but I had been so convincingly assured, both by the diplomatic agent in London and by the official who took charge of the unloading, that there would be no trouble for me, that I decided to run the risk. When the custom house opened I presented my papers, which called for a cargo of general merchandise. No questions were asked as to the disposition of the goods and

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I was given a clearance, or permit to leave the port. This clinched my suspicion, which had been growing stronger with each of the preceding incidents, that the arms were imported with the secret approval of the Austrian Government. Austria had previously proved her friendship for Montenegro by refusing to allow the Turks to occupy Cettinje, the capital, after they had suppressed the last revolt. The Montenegrins rose again during the Russo-Turkish war, which began soon after our arrival at Cattaro, and, with the aid of the arms I had carried to them, finally achieved their long-prayed-for independence, which was acknowledged by Turkey in the Treaty of Berlin.

I devoted a few days to a visit in Cettinje, which, far from what my imagination had pictured it, was nothing but a collection of hovels, but the people were in marked contrast to their surroundings and made up for the shortcomings of their homes. The men were tall, very few of them being under six feet, and handsome; the girls were beautiful, with the grace and features of nobility, but, as most of the hard work fell to them while the men protected them, they aged quickly. In their picturesque native costume, resplendent with crimson and gold, they were the handsomest race I had seen in Europe. War enthusiasm was rampant and nothing else was talked

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of. I was tempted to stay and fight with them; if I had known their language I think I would have done so, for they are born warriors and the love of it will never fail them. Their dream, as with all of their race in the Balkans, is the restoration of the great Servian Empire of six hundred years ago, which included practically all of the peninsula, and so long as they exist they will be trying to drive the Turk out of Europe.

I loafed along through the Mediterranean on my way back to London and spent the next year or more in enjoying myself and squandering money, which, in those days, was my favorite pastime after a series of adventures. I knew I had only to go to sea to coin more money, so the spending of it produced nothing but pleasure. In the Spring of 1879, with the breaking out of the boundary war in which always aggressive Chile was matched against Peru and Bolivia, which two neighbors had long been in secret alliance to guarantee the independence of each other, the call to South America came to me again. I itched to have a hand in the affair and my desire was soon gratified when I responded to a summons from the manager for Sir William Armstrong & Co., the gun makers. He said he had a shipment of heavy guns for Peru, which were to be delivered at San Lorenzo, a fort on

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an island, which guards the city, at the entrance to the Bay of Callao. Callao is the port of Lima, the capital, and I was advised that the Chilanos were maintaining an effective blockade there. Peru had only six serviceable ships when the war started. Chile had a much stronger fleet though her ships were of inferior speed. She had so many of them, however, that Peru had been unable to raise the blockade. After stating the situation, Armstrong's manager sent me to Great Portland Place to interview the Peruvian naval *attaché*, who had charge of the shipment. "It is a ticklish job," was the manager's parting advice. "You will find spies all along the line and it will require all of your skill to deliver the cargo. Don't be mealy-mouthed about the price you ask for it."

I agreed with the naval *attaché* to deliver the guns at Callao for fifty thousand dollars. He was inclined to haggle over the price, but came to my terms in the end. It was stipulated that I was to receive that amount if the cargo was delivered or if my ship was sunk by the Chilanos while defending herself, whereas if I was captured or if I sank the ship to avoid capture, I was to get nothing. I knew I would need a ship that could do sixteen knots an hour or better for this undertaking and as I preferred to own her, so that I could do what I pleased

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with her, I bought the "Britannia" outright, for seventy-five thousand dollars, from the London and Hull Steamship Company. She had done seventeen knots, and probably could do it again, and was strongly built, though she was not intended for a dead weight cargo in deep sea sailing.

In the eyes of international law carrying arms, or other contraband, for warring nations is very different from furnishing munitions of war to rebels, though the moral principle, as I see it, is the same. In the first instance, friendly powers, so called, are glad to furnish the warring nations with guns, with which they may kill each other off, at a profit to their own citizens. In this case it is a survival of the fittest, with the peaceful nations extending their sympathy to both of the fighters and their aid to the one with the deepest war chest. On the other hand, the sale of arms to rebels is forbidden, regardless of the fact that there can be no revolution without a rebellion, and that it is only through revolution, which is simply evolution, that mankind has advanced out of the so-called dark ages, even though they may have been, after all, the best. With the rebels, no matter how lofty the principles they are fighting for, it is not at all a question of the survival of the fittest, but the perpetuation of the government that is, no mat-

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ter how bad. The "comity of nations" is such a fearsome bugaboo that those who revolt against the established order of things, however galling it may be, are frowned upon by all nations and given no rights at all. To furnish them with arms is a crime; a violation of a law which, I am glad to say, I never have respected.

In the case of Peru and Bolivia and Chile it was a war of nations, with all of the other powers smiling approval; therefore no trans-shipment of the cargo, at Amsterdam, or some other convenient clearing house, was necessary. Secrecy was required only to keep from the Chilean Government knowledge of the fact that arms had been shipped to Peru and, if that could not be done, to prevent it from discovering the vessel on which they had been despatched. We got the cargo aboard without, so far as could be seen, arousing the suspicion of the Chilean agents, though there was no doubt in my mind that they knew of the purchase of the guns. We then took on as much coal as the ship would carry, including a lot of smokeless, and got out, ostensibly headed for Japan. I promptly rechristened the ship the "Salome" and prepared a set of papers which indicated that we were bound for Guayaquil, Ecuador, with a general cargo. We put in at St. Vincent, in the Cape Verde

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Islands, for coal, and, for the same purpose, at Perambuco and Montevideo. At the latter port I took on every pound of coal the ship would hold, including a deckload, for it was a long run from there to Callao.

I did not take a chance on going through the narrow Straits of Magellan, and right past the Chilean port of Punta Arenas, but went clear around the Horn. On the way down to the Horn from Montevideo I stood far out, for I suspected that the Chilianos might have a ship doing sentry duty at the lower end of the east coast and, while I had no fear that she could run me down, I wished to avoid all suspicion. When we rounded the Horn I headed straight west for three days, until we were well clear of the coast and outside of the regular course, and then steamed due north until we reached the latitude of Callao. Then we began burning our smokeless coal and headed in, slowly and cautiously. When we were twelve or fifteen miles offshore I sighted the smoke of a vessel coming down from the north, and, soon afterward, another one approaching from the south. Experience and that sixth sense which every successful blockade runner must possess, told me that they were two of the blockading fleet. I stayed so far down on the horizon that I could make

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out nothing but their smoke and watched them as they approached each other, met, and drew apart. I waited until each of them was, as nearly as I could calculate it, as far from what my course would be as I was from the harbor, and then made a dash for it, taking chances on finding one or two guard ships on post right in front of the city, and prepared to show them my heels the moment I sighted them. Luckily, there were no ships off the harbor nor did either of the patrol ships sight me, and I sailed up to the government dock with no more trouble than if I had been going into Liverpool. The guns were taken out and I received my money, which was the easiest I had ever honestly earned, but it was because I understood the game and had been careful.

While the cargo was being unshipped the blockaders learned that I had run past them and, to get even with me, I suppose, they laid in wait for us to come out. That did not worry me, however. I was in no particular hurry to leave and waited until they were weary of watching. Then, on a dark night, I stole out, hugged the shore to the south and slipped away from them, without having as much as a hail thrown at me. I restored the ship to her proper name and self but took the same course back again

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around the Horn to keep clear of any entangling alliances with the Chilean warships. I put in at Buenos Ayres for coal, picked up a cargo for Liverpool, and on my arrival there resold the ship for a few thousand dollars less than I had paid for her.

CHAPTER XI

STEALING A BRITISH SHIP

IN the old days, when I was cavorting with contraband throughout the West Indies and South America, I ran into one unpleasant incident which left me with a large moral,—or immoral, according to the point of view,—obligation on my hands. During a quiet spell I had bought, at a bargain, a little schooner at St. Thomas, loaded her with mahogany at Santo Domingo, and started for Liverpool, to see what was going on in that part of the world. We were caught in a heavy gale and were forced to run into Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, where we arrived in a sinking condition. On the false charge that my papers were forged the agent for Lloyds', with whom the ship was insured, seized the vessel as I was having her repaired, and had me arrested for barratry. I was taken to Halifax, where I was put to considerable inconvenience in securing bail. I pleaded my own case and, as soon as I could get a hearing, was released, but in the meantime the agent for the underwriters had libelled my ship and sold her at auction, and her new owners had sent her away to South

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America. It was a downright steal but I did not consider it worth my while to stay there and fight the case, so I simply swore to some day make Lloyds' pay dearly for the loss of my ship, and let it go at that for the time being.

My last real adventure had ended with the burial of the "Leckwith," for there had been nothing thrilling in the delivery of the arms I had carried to Montenegro and Peru, and I was hungry for some new excitement, the very essence and sole enjoyment of my life. While casting about for something to satisfy my appetite the recollection of the Yarmouth outrage came over me and I decided to steal a ship and let the underwriters pay for her, as partial compensation for the one they had stolen from me. After a survey of the available supply, following my return to London from Peru, late in the Summer of 1879, I hit on the "Ferret," a handsome and fairly fast little passenger steamer belonging to the Highland Railway Company, which was lying at Gourock Bay on the Clyde. They would not let her out on a general charter, which was what I wanted, so I concluded to charter her for a year for a cruise in the Mediterranean, with the option of purchase for fourteen thousand pounds at the end of that time. All of the negotiations were conducted and the deal closed by

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Joe Wilson, my trusted aide, and I was careful to impress him with the necessity for the insertion of the option of purchase clause. I had so much confidence in him that I did not closely examine the charter papers and not until it was too late did I discover that he had neglected to cover the one vital point. My plan was to go back out East and dig up the guns which Frank Norton and I had buried on a little island when we left the China Sea, and perhaps, if I found that I could stand it to revisit the scenes of the supreme joy and sadness which had come to me with the discovery of the Beautiful White Devil, resume the unholy occupation of preying on the pirates between Singapore and Hong Kong. I wanted the option of purchase clause inserted in the charter partly as a sop to my conscience and partly with the idea that if we were, by any remote chance, apprehended before we reached the China Sea, I could announce that I had exercised my option and was prepared to pay for the ship. I was not sure that my conscience, for I still had one, would let me carry the deal through, and I figured that I could comfort it, if it troubled me too much, with the assurance that I might really buy the ship after all, though I am frank to say I had no such intention.

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With the delivery of the charter, in proper form as I supposed, I made a great show of fitting the ship out for a yachting cruise, at the same time smuggling on board two small cannon and a lot of rifles and ammunition. Lorensen, my old captain, was seriously ill, so I took on as sailing master a man named Watkins. He was well recommended but it later developed that he had a strain of negro blood and a well-defined streak of yellow. Tom Leigh, one of my old men, was first officer, and next to him was George Ross, another new one. We coaled at Cardiff and cleared for Malaga. We passed Gibraltar late in the afternoon, as was intended, and signalled "All well" to the observer for Lloyds'. As soon as it was dark we headed over toward the other shore for twelve or fifteen miles and then stood straight out to sea again. As we made the second change in our course we stove in a couple of our boats and threw them overboard, along with a lot of life preservers. I wanted to make it appear that the "Ferret" had foundered, and we ran into a heavy blow which dovetailed beautifully into my scheme. At daylight we were well clear of Gibraltar but within sight of the Morrocan coast. I called the crew aft and addressed them to this effect:

"Taking advantage of the option of purchase

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clause in the charter, I now declare myself the owner of this ship and will pay for her, as stipulated, at the end of the period for which she is chartered. We are going on a very different trip from that for which you signed. It will be attended by some danger but, probably, by profits which will more than compensate you for the risk you run. Those of you who wish to go with me will receive double pay, a bonus of fifty dollars for signing new papers, and a share of the profits from the trip. Those who do not care to go may take a boat and go ashore."

Every man agreed to stay with me. I thereupon rechristened the ship the "India," a name legitimately held by a vessel on the other side of the world, as was indicated by Lloyds' register, fired a gun and dipped the flag and declared her in commission. At the same time I rechristened myself, a ceremony to which I was equally accustomed, and took the name of James Stuart Henderson. I presented the ship with a new log and certificate of registry and other necessary papers, from the counterfeit blanks I always carried, and all of the men signed the new articles. We then headed for Santos, Brazil, with the idea of keeping clear of British waters until the loss of the "Ferret" had become an established fact. On the way the brass plate on the

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main beam, showing that the engines were built for the "Ferret," was removed, and the new name took the place of the old one everywhere about the ship. The chart room and wheel house were taken off the bridge and rebuilt over the wheel amidships. Some of the upper works were stripped away and the whole appearance of the vessel was changed to such an extent that even her builders would hardly have recognized her.

At Santos I bought outright a cargo of coffee and headed for Cape Town, South Africa, where I consigned it to Wm. G. Anderson & Son, with instructions to sell it for cash, and quickly. On the trip across the Atlantic, Ross, the second officer, who had been one of the boldest at first, all at once became very anxious regarding the outcome of the trip and his future welfare. Watkins, the sailing master, who had shown a domineering nature that I did not like, also hoisted the white feather. Griffin, too, the chief engineer, displayed some symptoms of cold feet, but he was a brave man at heart and his trouble was easily cured. I allowed Ross to return to England from Cape Town, and Watkins caught the gold fever and started for Pretoria. I had no fear that either of them would engage in any unwise talk, for both had signed forged articles with their eyes wide open.

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I made Leigh sailing master and we cleared light for Australia, with a short stop at the Mauritius for coal. We coaled again at Albany, West Australia. From there we went to Port Adelaide, South Australia, and then on to Melbourne, where we came to grief. Off Port Philip Head we signalled for a pilot and a canny Scot came aboard. He seemed suspicious of us from the first and I noticed that he was studying the ship closely as we steamed up to an anchorage off Williamstown. Two young royal princes had just arrived on a British fleet and there were gala goings-on when we entered the harbor.

I landed at once and went to the Civil Service Club Hotel to recuperate from a bad case of malaria which I had contracted at the Mauritius. While not alarmed by the apparent suspicion of the pilot, I was impressed by it, and gave strict orders to Leigh to allow no one to come aboard. Leigh's one weakness was drink and to guard against his becoming helplessly intoxicated I instructed Wilson to either remain on board or visit the ship every day. My fever grew worse after I went ashore and in two or three days the doctor decided that I should have a nurse, as I was all alone. The doctor was with me when the nurse arrived and as he entered the door the doctor made a quick movement as though some-

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thing had startled him, and looked from one of us to the other in amazement. I could not imagine what had happened until he said: "That man looks enough like you to be your twin brother. I never have seen such a resemblance between two men."

I surveyed the nurse more critically and saw that we did look strangely alike, even to the scarred face. He had a scar on his left cheek, whereas mine is on my right, and it was shorter than mine, but it served to heighten our resemblance. We could not have been more alike in build if we had been cast from the same mould, and any one who did not know us intimately could easily have been excused for taking one of us for the other. The nurse said his name was William Nourse and that he had arrived in Melbourne only two or three days before from Tasmania, where he had worked in the Hobartstown hospital. As we got better acquainted he told me he had had a run of hard luck in Hobartstown; that his wife had deserted him and he had taken to drink and lost his position, and that he had come to Australia to make a fresh start.

While I was recovering at the hotel events were transpiring in connection with the ship which tended to dissuade my spirit from becoming overproud. Wilson, it developed, soon relaxed his vigilance and

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gave himself up to pleasures ashore but without coming near me, whereupon old Leigh blithely betook himself to his beloved bottle. After a few days the shrewd Scotch pilot paid the ship a friendly visit, found Leigh full three sheets in the wind, encouraged him to proceed with his potations until he fell asleep, and then went over the ship at his leisure, taking measurements and making observations. Naturally, her measurements corresponded exactly with those of the "Ferret," which had been reported as missing with a probability that she had gone down in the Mediterranean, and he reported his suspicions and the result of his investigation to the authorities. Being a Scotchman he was not actuated so much by honesty and a desire that right should prevail as by the expectation of a substantial reward. The ship was promptly seized for some technical violation of the port regulations, which gave the officials an opportunity to make a detailed inspection and take all of her measurements, and Leigh and the few members of the crew who were on board when the seizure was made were detained there. Leigh refused to say a word but one or two of the crew, believing the fat was in the fire and wishing to save their own bacon, told enough to confirm all of the suspicions that were entertained regarding us. Leigh was then formally

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placed under arrest and search was instituted for Wilson and me.

I was greatly surprised when, late one afternoon about ten days after our arrival at Melbourne, I received word from Joe that the ship had been recognized as the "Ferret" and seized, that he had taken to the bush and that I had better disappear as quickly and quietly as possible if I wished to escape arrest, for the officers were looking for both of us. Fearful, for the first time, that Joe had made a mistake, and cursing my carelessness, I dug into my papers and discovered that the charter contained no option of purchase clause. That made it serious business and I understood why Joe had taken such precipitate flight. I knew if I stayed at the hotel my arrest was only a matter of a few hours and that if I sought to escape, the chances were that I would be caught, but I determined to make a try for it. By that time I was able to be up and walk around my room, though I had not left it, but I had Nourse pass the word around the hotel that I had had a serious relapse and was in such a precarious condition that I must not be disturbed by visitors nor by any noise near my rooms.

I told Nourse that a warrant was out for my arrest on some technical violation of the port regulations

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and that, while I had no fear of the result of a trial, I did not feel strong enough to go through it, and therefore I intended to leave at once and secretly and stay away until the trouble blew over. He agreed to go with me and soon after dark we left the hotel quietly by a rear entrance which opened onto an alley. I left behind all of my luggage except a bag in which I carried about five thousand, five hundred pounds in gold and Bank of England notes, and a few articles of clothing. We engaged a carriage and drove to a suburb on the railroad running to Sydney, where we stayed all night, as all of the evening trains had left. My idea was to get to Sydney or Newcastle, where I hoped to bribe the captain of some outgoing ship to take me on board as a stow-away. We took the morning train and rode as far as Seymour, about seventy-five miles from Melbourne. There we hired a rig and drove across country to Longwood, where we picked up the railroad after it had passed an important junction point which I wished to avoid as I feared the officers would be watching for us there. On the long drive to Longwood I became convinced that my capture was certain, for the country was so thinly settled that we were sure to attract attention and be easily followed, if we undertook to drive through it, while if I stuck

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to the railroad I was sure to be apprehended. In seeking some new way out of the dilemma I conceived the idea of having Nourse take my place. There was no reason that money could not remove to prevent him from doing so, for neither of us was known, and a physical description, such as the police would have, would fit either of us. I was becoming more and more apprehensive of danger and as we neared Longwood I put the proposition up to him.

"What do you say, Nourse, to changing places with me and letting yourself be arrested, if it comes to that? I will engage a good lawyer to defend you and even if you should be convicted, which I doubt, you would not have to spend more than a few months in jail, at the most. You are strong and could stand the confinement, while it would about put me under the turf. According to your own story there is no one who cares what trouble you get into, and even if you went to jail you probably would be as happy there as anywhere. How much will you take to do it?"

"I had been thinking of that very thing," he replied. "I don't care much what happens to me, but I am not exactly hungry for a long term in Pentridge. If this thing is no worse than you say it is, though, I'll

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swap places with you and see it through for two hundred pounds."

I accepted his terms without argument. He already knew enough about me so that he could adopt my identity, without fear of detection except under a searching inquiry, but I quickly framed up a life history for him and told him the full and true story of the "Ferret." I cautioned him, however, if he was arrested, to make no statement of any kind until he had talked with the lawyer I would send to him. As soon as we reached Longwood we exchanged clothing, even down to our underwear, socks, and shoes. Nourse was transformed into James Stuart Henderson, dressed by Pool of London, and I became a rather shabbily attired nurse. I paid Nourse his money, which relieved me of most of my load of gold, and concealed the rest of my money in my rough and roomy shoes and under my more or less dirty garments.

We had just finished dinner and were sitting alone in the hotel office, rehearsing the part Nourse was to play, when a sergeant and two officers, who had got track of us at Seymour, rode up on horseback. We saw them through the window and I moved back into the shadow for, though I did not look greatly unlike Nourse in our changed garb, I did not wish the

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officers to notice our facial resemblance. With only a glance at me they walked right up to Nourse and placed him under arrest. He professed amazement but readily admitted that he was James Stuart Henderson. He said he was driving through the country, with a nurse, for his health, having just recovered from the fever.

The orders of the officers called for the arrest of only one man so I was not interfered with. They were after big game and, much to my satisfaction, considered me hardly worthy of their notice. Still anxious to avoid close range comparison with Nourse, I did not return to Melbourne on the same train with them the next morning, but went down by the one that followed it. I kept well clear of the jail to which the bogus Henderson had been hustled and went to a little hotel on Swanston Street, kept by a German named Hellwig. The first thing I heard was that Joe, who had taken the train ahead of me, had been captured at Albury, where the railroad crosses the Murray River, which divides Victoria from New South Wales, and was on his way back, in charge of an officer, to join Leigh and my counterfeit presentment behind the bars.

I at once engaged Jarvis, the best barrister in Australia, to defend them, and later employed Gillette

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& Stanton, another high-class firm, to assist him. I told them, of course, the real facts, and had them instruct Leigh and Joe to coach Nourse in the part he was to play and to maintain the proper attitude toward him. The moment Leigh saw "Henderson" he knew there was something wrong somewhere but he was too shrewd to indicate it and greeted the newcomer cordially. I had described Leigh to Nourse so that he could not mistake him and he walked right up to him and shook hands. When Joe joined them in jail Leigh got to him first and posted him. They were charged with conspiracy and barratry and were indicted, altogether, on seven counts.

Nourse was as game as a hornet and played his part well, yet he was not born a gentleman and he was altogether lacking in that *savoir faire* which is regarded as a necessary makeup of the typical soldier of fortune, which Henderson was supposed to be. George Smyth, the prosecuting attorney, was a shrewd chap, as well as a gilt-edged sea lawyer, and it was not long until he began to suspect that he had a bogus Henderson in limbo and that the real ravisher of maritime law was still at liberty. Some of the other officials came to doubt that they had the right man and this suspicion became so strong by the time the trial came on that they had detectives out

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quietly searching for the real Henderson. This information reached the lawyers whom I had employed, but whom I saw infrequently as I remained discreetly in the background, and they insisted, as they had previously suggested, that I go away until the case was concluded.

"This case is much more serious than you realize," said Gillette, as he again urged me to leave Melbourne for my own protection, or go into close hiding and stay there. "Unfortunately, Nourse is not nearly so clever as you. You are damned clever, but you are not clever enough to avoid being nabbed if you stay around here while the trial is on."

"I think you're wrong," I told him, "but I'm paying you for your advice and if it is good enough to buy it ought to be good enough to take. I'll go out and bury myself."

"Right," he said. "See that you make a good job of it."

"I will," I replied. "I am going to bury myself in a real tomb."

The lawyer looked up a bit startled. "You don't mean that you intend to kill yourself?" he asked with some anxiety.

I laughed at him. "Not much," I told him. "I like to explore strange lands but I always want to

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come back. If there really are any detectives on my trail, the last place they will look for me is the cemetery, and I will go out there and cache myself away in Sir William Clark's tomb. It is an ideal hiding place, so far as security is concerned, and you can devote all of your thought to the trial, without any fear that I will be discovered and disarrange things."

"But people are buried in there," exclaimed the man of law with a show of horror which evidenced great reverence for the dead.

"So much the better for my purpose," I said, as I walked out of his office. "I'm off for my tomb."

The idea of using the Clark tomb, which I had previously noticed while walking through the cemetery, as a hiding place, had come to me while the lawyer was urgently renewing his advice to me to get under cover until the conclusion of the trial. The mausoleum was in an out-of-the-way corner of the dead city and I knew that if I could get inside of it I would be safe from intrusion. It was about twelve by sixteen feet in size and was closed with a solid iron door, but above it was a grating which would furnish plenty of ventilation.

The landlord of the hotel where I was stopping had a delightful Dutch daughter, with whom I had become very friendly, and when I returned there after

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my talk with the lawyer, she informed me that two men had been around making guarded inquiries regarding a man answering my description. She took them for detectives, she said, and without knowing or suspecting why they were looking for me she had thrown them off the scent. This convinced me that there was a chase on, after all, and that it was getting so hot that I had no time to lose.

With a blanket wrapped about the upper part of my body, and with the pockets of Nourse's dirty old white overcoat stuffed with pilot bread, canned meats, candles, a dark lantern, and books, I went out to the cemetery that evening. I had some doubt about being able to get into the tomb but I succeeded in picking the lock with a piece of heavy wire and proceeded to take up my abode with the departed Clarks. There were three of them and from the sizes of the caskets I took them to be father, mother, and child. There was one unoccupied niche and in that I arranged my bed, with my blanket and Nourse's overcoat.

I lived in the tomb for three weeks without arousing the slightest suspicion that it was occupied. My surroundings did not worry me at all—in fact I never had such quiet and orderly companions—and after I had adapted myself to them I was fairly com-

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fortable. My meals were simple to a degree that would have delighted a social settlement worker. I was accustomed to softer beds, but the change did me no harm. I did most of my sleeping during the day, when I could not smoke without fear of being discovered, and every night, between midnight and dawn, I took a walk through the cemetery. Twice a week, at an appointed rendezvous, I met the landlord's daughter, who brought me a fresh supply of canned stuff, bread, and reading matter, and the latest news of the trial. Twice, toward the last of it, when I was very hungry I ventured into the outskirts of the city and filled up at a cheap eating house. During the early morning and evening I read by the light of the dark lantern, which was so placed; with the blanket as a screen, that its rays could not be seen through the grating over the door. By the time the trial was well over and I was free to come out I had fallen into the routine of my new hotel and was so well situated that, if I could have been assured of about three square meals a week, I would not have complained greatly if I had been forced to stay there six months.

The trial was held before Judge Williams and resulted in a conviction. I had expected no other verdict, for with the option of purchase clause missing

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from the charter it was a clear case. The lawyers for the defence contended, of course, that Henderson had announced that he had purchased the ship and that only his illness had prevented him from so advising her owners, but they could not satisfactorily explain why he and Wilson had taken to the bush when the vessel was seized. Nourse was subjected to a most severe examination by the prosecuting attorney in an effort to prove that he was not the real Henderson, but he had been thoroughly coached by Joe and Leigh and acquitted himself so well that much of the suspicion which had been entertained that he was playing a part was removed, but not all of it.

The crucial moment came when the clerk of the court called out, "James Stuart Henderson, stand up," and Judge Williams asked him if he knew of any reason why sentence should not be passed upon him. According to the lawyers, the situation was intensely dramatic. The judge, the prosecuting attorney, and all of the more or less skeptical officials, were boring holes through poor Nourse's head with their eyes. He had but to open his mouth to clear himself and start every officer in Australia on a hunt for me from which I would have found it hard to escape, but he was true blue. He looked back at the judge bravely and simply said, "No, sir."

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Nourse and Wilson were sentenced to seven years and Leigh to three and one-half years in Pentridge prison. With the time deducted for good behavior, this meant five years and three months for Nourse and Joe and less than three years for Leigh. When the case assumed a more serious aspect than I had believed it would when I bargained with Nourse to take my place, I sent word to him that I would pay him well if he would "play the string out," and as soon as I left the tomb I deposited five thousand dollars which was to be paid to him when he was released. I spent some time and considerable money in an effort to secure a pardon for my companions, but when I found that was impossible I returned to England, with a promise to be back in Australia by the time their terms expired. On the long trip back to London I spent a lot of time in reproaching myself for the result of the unfortunate cruise. It was the first mistake I had ever made and, while I was not primarily to blame, the responsibility was mine, for I was at fault in not having seen that all of the papers were in proper form. That experience taught me a lesson and I never again fell into a blunder of that sort. The Highland Railway subsequently sold the "Ferret" to run between Albany and Adelaide.

CHAPTER XII

A LAND OF MYSTERY AND MURDER

WITH my return to London in the early eighties, after I had been sent to prison by proxy for seven years in Australia, the old lure of the West Indies, with their continuous riot of revolutions, came over me so strongly that I could not hold out against it, nor did I try. Frank Norton, my old partner in piracy, had the "Queen of the Seas" at the East Indian docks, where he was displaying a ship ventilating apparatus which he had invented. He urged me to go back to the China Sea with him and resume operations against the pirates, but I put him off. Soon after leaving him I ran into an English engineer named Tucker, whom I had known in Venezuela, and from him I learned that Guzman Blanco, the Dictator, was in Paris, his foreign capital, from which he was directing the government of Venezuela through a dummy President, and was anxious to see me. I was not particularly desirous of seeing him, however, for I feared I could not resist him, and I had no wish to again be tied down in Caracas, as I had been before when I was his confidential agent.

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I was much more interested in reports which reached me, through contraband channels, that a new revolution was shaping up in Costa Rica, and that there was a prospect of trouble in Hayti and even in Venezuela.

I took the first ship for Halifax and went from there to St. John, New Brunswick, where I bought the fore and aft schooner "George V. Richards." She was a trim-looking craft of about one hundred and eighty tons, and stanch, but, as I discovered later, as faddish as an old maid. We never could trim her to suit her and she never behaved twice the same under similar conditions. In the same weather she would settle back on her stern like a balky mule or sail like a racing yacht, just as the spirit moved her. Yet I was fond of her, for she was a great deal like myself; she had her wits about her all of the time and was at her best in an emergency. I took her to Bridgeport, Connecticut, where I loaded up with old Sharps and Remington rifles and a lot of ammunition, and, after burying them under sixty tons of coal, sailed for Venezuela to see what was going on in Guzman's absence.

Instead of going direct to La Guaira, where I was well known, I headed for Maracaibo, the city that gave Venezuela its name. Alonzo de Ojeda, who fol-

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lowed Columbus, sailed westward along the coast of Terra Firme, which the Great Discoverer had spoken of as "the most beautiful lands in the world," to the Gulf of Maracaibo. There he found several Indian villages built on piles and, prompted by this suggestion, he named the land Venezuela, or "Little Venice." Maracaibo has a splendid harbor for light-draft vessels, and but for the fact that it has been subject to the whims of successive plundering presidents it would now be the chief city of the country. Not only is it the port of a great and rich section of Venezuela, but it is the only outlet for the coffee and other products of a large part of Colombia. Ever since their separation there has been ill-feeling between the two republics, and it has suited the fancy of every Venezuelan president since Guzman's day, Castro being the chief offender, to spasmodically shut off all communication with Colombia, with consequent disastrous effects to the trade of Maracaibo. As a partial offset to these recurrent embargoes, the city boasts of a brand of yellow fever that has actually made it famous, at least among travellers in South America. It is so mild that it is seldom fatal and wise folks who are ticketed for the interior of Venezuela go to Maracaibo and stay until they have had the fever and become immune.

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The collector of customs at Maracaibo "borrowed" a fine rifle from me, which is one of the South American varieties of graft, and put me up at the club, where I was thrown in friendly contact with the people I wished to meet. I found that General Alcantara was acting as dummy President while Guzman was enjoying himself in Europe, and I soon satisfied myself, from remarks dropped by his friends in response to my guarded inquiries, that he was ambitious to become the ruler of Venezuela in fact as well as in name. The movement to overthrow Guzman was, in fact, taking definite form, and I sold a part of my arms to Alcantara's friends. They wanted to buy the entire cargo, but I refused to part with it, on the ground that the bulk of it had been contracted for elsewhere. It was apparent that serious trouble was brewing for Guzman and, instead of proceeding to Costa Rica, I sailed for La Guaira, intending to visit Caracas and look the situation over at close range.

At the capital there was the same undercurrent of revolt against the dictatorship of Guzman, which was being secretly encouraged by the partisans of the acting President. I called at the Yellow House to pay my respects to Alcantara, whom I had known in Guzman's army, and in the course of our conversation

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he suggested that I remain in Caracas and become his friend, as I had been Guzman's. He did not tell me of his real ambition in so many words, but I needed no binoculars to see what was in his mind. I at once wrote Guzman fully, telling him of Alcantara's treachery and describing the situation as I had found it, and then sailed for Costa Rica. Guzman had also heard of what was going on through other sources and, as I subsequently learned, he returned to Venezuela a few months later, before the revolt that was being hatched had broken its shell. The government was promptly turned over to him by Alcantara, who at once started to leave the country, evidently fearing that if he remained he would be summarily sent to San Carlos, then as now the unhappy home of political prisoners. He started for La Guaira by the old post road, along which were a number of public houses. In one of these he met a party of politicians and while with them he died suddenly. It was charged by Alcantara's friends that he was poisoned by order of Guzman, who suspected that he was going away to launch a revolution, but the friends of Guzman claimed that he ate heartily of rich salads while in a heated condition and died from acute indigestion. The latter version of it has always been my view, for Guzman was not the man

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to have an enemy, nor even a friend who had played him false, put out of the way in such fashion. Guzman was a dictator to his finger tips, but he was nothing of a murderer.

The Costa Ricans were, I found, making one of their periodical but always futile efforts to depose their President, General Tomaso Guardia, and I had no difficulty in disposing of my arms and ammunition, which I exchanged for a cargo of coffee. I might have joined the revolution had I not become convinced that it had no more chance of success than those which had preceded it. Gen. Guardia, who ruled until he died, was one of the few strong men Central America has produced. He was the Diaz of Costa Rica and as much of a dictator as Guzman Blanco, whom he greatly resembled in his friendship for foreigners and his contempt for the natives. When he heard of a political leader, so called, who was trying to stir up trouble, Gen. Guardia would send for him and say: "Your health has not been good for some time. I see that you are failing. You need a long trip. Go to Europe and stay a year," or two years or five, according to circumstances. A couple of trusted lieutenants were assigned to stay with the politely condemned exile, "to see that he wanted for nothing," and he never failed to take the

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next ship for foreign shores. Another presidential method was to summon some discontented one, who was planning an insurrection, and make him a member of the Cabinet. Flattered by this honor the new Minister was easily tempted to come out with exaggerated expressions of confidence in Gen. Guardia and his government. Thereupon the President would kick him into the street. "There," he would say to the natives, "you see, all that man wanted was money. He is nothing of a patriot."

Guardia always smiled, whether he was sentencing a man to exile or ejecting him from his shifting Cabinet; he regarded the natives as only children. By such methods as these he made himself master of the country, and the little rebellions which sprang up from time to time were quickly suppressed. One of the foreigners for whom he developed a great liking was Dr. W. R. Bross, a New York physician who was at Port Limon with a party of engineers who were building a railroad from the coast into the interior. While on a visit to Port Limon the President discovered that Dr. Bross had much more skill than any of the physicians at the capital. He wanted him to go to Europe with him and, when this proposition was rejected, urged him to accompany him to San Jose, the capital, and become his private physi-

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cian, at a salary he was to name himself. This offer was also turned down. Had Dr. Bross been more worldly, and less devoted to the men who were in his care, he could have secured concessions worth millions of dollars, for Gen. Guardia was more than generous to his friends.

I suspected that the coffee I received had been stolen from planters who were loyal to the government, and that the rebels had "levied" on it as a war tax, but as they charged me three cents less a pound than the market price, while I charged them four or five times as much for the arms and ammunition as they cost me, I had no compunctions of conscience about taking it. It is a waste of good time and precious protoplasm to sympathize with Central or South Americans who are pillaged by rebels, for in the next uprising the victims of the previous one will, in their turn, be the plunderers. Thanks to the meddling of American warships, things have quieted down a great deal within recent years, but in the good old days, of which I am writing, revolutions were as much a part of the daily life of the people in those countries as their morning meal, and more so than their morning bath. In fact, the most popular morning salutation was, "Who are we revolting for [or against] to-day?" Few went further and asked why

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they were in revolt, for that was a minor consideration and there were not many who knew. At least nine-tenths of the steady routine of revolutions were due to nothing more than personal ambition, which has been the curse of Latin America. Some man of influence or a disgruntled general who had helped to elevate some other general to the presidency, and then had not been shown the consideration to which he thought himself entitled, would raise the standard of rebellion. Under a plethora of promises as to what he would do when he became president, he would attract other dissatisfied ones to his cause, and it usually was only a question of time until he overturned the unstable government. Then he would, in turn, be unable or unwilling to make good on all of his promises, real or implied, and those whom he disappointed would proceed to throw him out. Every man of importance had a following of ignorant natives who, either because they had grown up in his section of the country and had been taught to show him homage, or because they expected to lead lazy lives when he became all-powerful, would follow him blindly. A revolution which involved any question of good government was almost unheard of. It is nothing but the inordinate and, among the upper classes, almost

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unanimous thirst for power that has retarded the development of these rich countries for generations. Blessed by nature beyond the understanding of those who have not spent years in them, they have been cursed by man. When they have become civilized and their development once sets in, it will eclipse anything America has ever seen.

But these observations are not a part of my story. With the cargo of loyalist coffee we headed for New Orleans. We made bad weather of it all of the way. The faddish ship wouldn't sail or heave to and was as cranky as an old man in his dotage. Some days we actually went backward, and it was a long time before we raised South Pass light and were picked up by a tug. The moment the hawser tightened the old ship threw herself back on her haunches and refused to budge. The captain of the towboat, after struggling strenuously to get us under way, dropped back and screamed at me, "What in hell is the matter with that damned old hooker?"

"You don't know how to tow and she knows it," I retorted.

"One would think you had all the anchors in the United States down," he shouted.

I assured him that we didn't have even one down and he tried it again and finally got us to going.

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We were off quarantine soon after sundown and discovered that an embargo of forty days against Central American ports had been raised only an hour before. The balkiness of the "Richards" had prevented us from having to ride at anchor for days or weeks and be subjected to casual inspection and gossip which might have caused trouble. While the delay had been of service to us in that respect it provoked some anxiety on another point. I had an idea that the Costa Rican Government might try to have the ship seized, and our trip had been such a long one that no time was to be lost in selling our cargo and getting away. I took samples of the coffee to New Orleans on a tug and placed them in the hands of old Peter Stevens, of the Produce Exchange, who sold the whole cargo in an hour.

While the coffee was coming out stores were going in, and we were out of the river again and on our way to Hayti in record time. Though I had good cause to remember Santo Domingo I never had been in the "Black Republic," and as I had heard there was a probability of some lively times there I determined to visit it before I returned to New York. But the crankiness of the "Richards" interfered with my plans. When we were about one hundred miles west of Key West the old ship committed suicide by burn-

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ing herself to death. The fire started in the hold amidships, but we could not even imagine what might have caused it. It was so unexpected that it had a good start before we discovered it. We fought it, of course, but we might as well have tried to quench a volcano in eruption. The strange craft had made up her mind to go under, and there was nothing for us to do but take to the whaleboat, which was large enough for all of us, as I had only a small crew. After we had shoved off we returned at considerable risk to rescue a big black cat which was on the ship when I bought her. We had christened him "John Croix," and every man on board undertook to teach him all he knew about navigation, with the result that the animal had become so highly educated that he could do everything about the ship but use the sextant.

Our humanity was well rewarded, for John saved our lives, or at least saved us from a lot of suffering. A stiff norther came up before we sighted land and for several days we were tossed about without any clear idea as to the direction in which we were being blown, for not once did we get a glimpse of sun or moon by which to take a reckoning. Eventually we drifted among the islands to the westward of Key West, and we headed for the largest one in sight. In the heavy sea that was running we made a bad mess

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of the landing. Our boat was overturned and stove in, the bung came out of the water cask, and all of our supplies and most of our instruments were lost. We got ashore all right, and John Croix with us, but we had neither food nor water, and when a search of the little island failed to reveal so much as a sign of a spring of fresh water, we began to give some thought to what our chances would be in the hereafter. We bivouacked gloomily that night on the beach. Early in the morning the cat awakened me by rubbing against my face. At first I thought he was only depressed, like the rest of us, and wanted company, but he pestered around until I got up and followed him. Calling to me over his shoulder he led the way to a clump of mangrove trees, whose roots overhung the bank three feet above high tide. John trotted under the mass of roots and began to purr loudly. I started to follow him and then backed out, but the cat yowled so loudly that I got down on all fours again and followed him. I crawled along for ten or twelve feet until I found John standing over a rivulet of fresh water about as big as my finger. I drank my fill from it and then awakened the others and told them of John's discovery. They hailed him as our saviour, and when he came trotting into camp a couple of hours later with an oyster in his mouth

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they were ready to beatify him. Until John had shown us the way to food, as he had led us to water, we had not thought of looking for oysters, of which there were millions around the roots of the mangrove trees. Strengthened and encouraged we patched up our boat and, when the storm had blown itself out, put to sea again and encountered a little schooner from St. John's, Florida, which took us to Key West, where we soon got a ship for New York. On the way north we put in at Charleston, where I had enjoyed much excitement as a blockade runner, and there I presented John Croix to a Methodist minister who promised to give him a good home.

I was still anxious to visit Hayti, that land of mystery and murder, and, in the guise of an English planter, I went there on a West Indian steamer. Hayti has had more internal troubles and more presidents than any other of the revolutionary republics and her domestic disorders will continue until they are stopped by some powerful outside influences, for the blacks and mulattoes are eternal enemies. In the first three years following the separation from Santo Domingo there were four presidents. In 1849 Soulouque, a negro, proclaimed himself Emperor, as Faustian I. He ruled with despotic power, renewed the war on Santo Domingo, and played hob gener-

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ally with the nation's finances and affairs. In 1858 General Geffrard, a mulatto whom Soulouque had condemned to death, revolted and proclaimed himself President. He restored the constitution and held on until 1867, when he was overthrown by General Salnave, who lasted three years before he was deposed and shot. He had four successors in twice as many years, the last one being General Salomon, who was at the head of affairs when I arrived on the scene.

It did not take me long to make up my mind that Hayti was the warmest hotbed of intrigue I had ever run across and I felt that I was among friends and in a thoroughly congenial atmosphere. The very air seemed to breed revolutions; perhaps because it was peopled with the spirits of the old buccaneers who had their headquarters at the western end of the island in the entrancing early days. There were many plotters for the presidency, but there were two great rival camps, one headed by General F. D. Legitime and the other by General Florville Hippolyte. Legitime was planning to overturn the government at once, but it was the scheme of Hippolyte, who was more cunning and willing to wait, to continue Salomon in power until the election of 1886, when he expected to secure his own election as Constitutional President. All of the plots and counter-plots were

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laid in secret, of course, yet all men of influence knew in a general way what the others were doing and where they stood, with due allowance for the treachery always found in Latin countries, which creates a delightful element of uncertainty.

Hippolyte was one of the ugliest negroes I have ever known—and my estimate of him as here set down is in no way influenced by the fact that some years later he arranged to have me carefully murdered. With his bloodshot eyes and white whiskers, which latter reminded one of dirty lace curtains, his cruel face was suggestive of some wild animal. He was abrupt and domineering in his manner and there was not a forgiving drop of blood in his veins. If the hippopotamus is as savage a brute as has been pictured, Hippolyte should have taken all of his name from that animal. He could laugh, but only like a hyena, and it was impossible for him to smile. Brutal and bloodthirsty, he was at the same time a forceful old villain and possessed of much native shrewdness. Like all of the blacks he was a devout voodoo worshipper, and with the aid of the *papalois*—the priesthood of the cannibalistic creed—he played on the superstitions of the ignorant negroes. We became well acquainted during the year or more that I loafed around Port au Prince, revelling in the oddly

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warlike surroundings and watching the budding plots, and at times I found him interesting.

Legitime was the opposite of Hippolyte in all of his qualities. He was a bright, intelligent, progressive mulatto; well educated for a Haytien and with a good address and the manners of a gentleman. Intense loyalty was one of his strongest characteristics and he had visions of his country's immediate future which have not yet, after twenty-five years, been in any degree realized. No one questioned his bravery, and while he to some extent lacked firmness and strength of character, I believed he would develop these vital traits with age, for he was then a comparatively young man. He had the elements of a first-class president, and had he ever become firmly established in that office Hayti would to-day be a very different country and a much more agreeable neighbor.

In the end I allied myself with Legitime, and in so doing incurred the bitter enmity of Hippolyte, who had told me something of his plans and had even gone so far as to suggest, without going into details, that I coöperate with him when the time for action arrived. The result was that when I went over to his hated rival he took it as a deadly insult, and the chances are that we would have taken a few shots

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at each other if my stay in the country had not been cut short. I was negotiating with Legitime to supply him with arms and take a commission in his army, and we were getting along famously toward a real revolution when suddenly, in the latter part of 1884, President Salomon ordered that he be expelled from the country for plotting against him. If Legitime had been less popular he would have been unceremoniously shot, but Salomon's influence was already beginning to wane and he did not care to add largely to his enemies, so he contented himself with an order of expulsion. At the same time, through the instrumentality of Hippolyte, the suggestion was conveyed to me that the climate of Hayti was not suited to my health. Legitime boarded a ship for Jamaica, which was conveniently in the harbor when his expulsion was announced, and I accompanied him. He told me the time was not ripe for his revolt and that he proposed to wait until the conditions were more favorable for him. As a matter of fact he waited four years, and while he succeeded in overthrowing Salomon in the end, his rule was short-lived. I remained with him in Kingston for some time and then, as I saw no prospect of quick action, returned to Australia, by way of London, where I resumed my British name of George MacFarlane.

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I reached Melbourne in 1885, after an absence of about four years, and went to Menzies' Hotel, which was not the one I had stopped at before, when I was James Stuart Henderson. Of my three companions who had been sent to prison for stealing the "Ferret," Leigh, the sailing master, had recently completed his term, while Nourse, who impersonated me, and Joe Wilson, had still nearly two years to serve. I located Leigh and put him to work for Nevins, a sail maker, and sent word to the others that I was there and would wait around until they came out. Then, fearing that I might be recognized by some of the officers who had suspected, during the trial, that Nourse was playing a part, with the probable result that I would be forced to again change places with him, which I had no wish to do, I went on to Sydney. There I met Montfort & Co., merchants and speculators, through whom I became financially interested in a group of silver properties known as the Sunny Corner Mines, in the Broken Hills district in New South Wales. We also laid claim to Mount Morgan, deceptively described as "A Mountain of Gold," which was partly in Queensland. We plunged heavily on a question of title, which was in litigation, and stood, as we thought, to make many millions. When the decision of the highest court was finally an-

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nounced the bottom fell out of our scheme, for we were knocked out at every point, and there was a void in my bank account which represented considerably more than one hundred thousand dollars.

From the time of my first visit to Australia the laboring men had been conducting an anti-Chinese agitation, to perpetuate and strengthen their power over capital. There were not then, nor are there now, nearly enough workers in the country to supply the demand. The native blacks are without question the laziest people under the sun. The notoriously indolent West Indian negro is an enterprising and ambitious citizen by comparison with them, for there is no power on earth by which they can be made to work. The Chinese, always on the lookout for a labor market, soon heard of the rich field and invaded it in droves, whereupon the white workmen of all grades set up a great hullabaloo; it was there I first heard the cry of the "Yellow Peril." The employers, fearful of antagonizing their employees, either joined with them or let them have their own way. They urged England to put a stop to the importation of Chinese and when the mother country, which was extending its "sphere of influence" (meaning thereby the acquisition of territory) further and further into the Celestial Empire, declined to act,

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Victoria and New South Wales took the matter into their own hands and passed a Chinese exclusion law. It provided that any ship captain who brought Chinese into these Provinces should be compelled to return them, forfeit his certificate, and pay a fine of not more than three hundred pounds for each "Chinkie," and he might also be sent to jail. Chinese were further prohibited from entering the restricted districts by the overland route, and while it was impossible to entirely shut them out, it was thought the new law would greatly reduce the number that entered the country.

It occurred to me that I might recoup my mining losses by importing Chinamen, without running any considerable risk of arrest, and I went into the business. It promised to be profitable, for the natural effect of the exclusion law was to intensify the desire of the "Chinkies" to get into the two Provinces, where the demand for them was the greater on account of their restricted number. I bought the old mission ship "Southern Cross," which took Bishop Selwyn to Australia, a fore and aft schooner of about two hundred tons, and sent her across the bay to Balmain to be overhauled and put in shape for her new purpose. I had her fitted up as a private yacht, but all of her fittings below decks were so arranged

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that they could be knocked down and stored away, leaving the hold open. On the first trip to China I had tiers and rows of berths built on the same quickly removable principle, and with this arrangement there was enough space to enable us to carry more than two hundred passengers without discomfort.

I brought Leigh up from Melbourne and made him sailing master and again began preying on the Chinkies, but in a more friendly way than when I was plundering their pirate junks in the China Sea. The Chinamen furnished their own food, and Quong Tart, a rich Chinese merchant of Sydney, paid me one hundred and fifty dollars for every one I landed in Victoria or New South Wales. He arranged for their shipment, so, when I arrived at Amoy or Shanghai, where they all came from, I had only to wait for the requisite number to come on board, and he also took charge of them when they were put ashore. In a spirit of dare-deviltry I landed the first shipload less than five miles north of Newcastle, the second largest city in New South Wales. The subsequent cargoes I unloaded on the beach north of Newcastle or south of Sydney, without ever feeling that I was in any serious danger of being discovered. Each time I sent word to Quong Tart where the next load would be put ashore and about the time I was expected he sent

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spies to the spot to see if any officers were hanging around and signal to me if there was danger of running into a trap. No two cargoes were ever landed at the same place and only Quong Tart knew where to look for me on the next trip. When Nourse and Wilson were released from prison the former scurried across Bass Strait to his old Tasmanian home with the money I had paid him for so successfully impersonating me. He considered that he had been well compensated for his compulsory retirement from active life and expected to invest his capital in some small business, to which affluent position, under ordinary conditions, he never could have aspired with any degree of confidence. Wilson's disposition was to go back to the sea with me, so I bought the "Nettie H," a handy little steamer, and put her into the Chinese smuggling trade. I took command of the steamer, with Leigh as sailing master, and put Wilson in charge of the schooner, as I could trust him with the least anxiety. He had none of Leigh's love for liquor and the result of his carelessness with the "Ferret" had made him as careful as a Scot. While the "Nettie H" was being fitted out, the authorities warned me that they knew what I was up to and it would go hard with me if they secured proof of their

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suspensions, but, knowing they were only shooting in the air, I laughed at them.

If this business of carrying Chinese under cover had been as productive of adventure as it was of profits, I would have stuck to it indefinitely, but it was so absolutely devoid of excitement that it palled on me. After we had made eight or nine trips, which more than repaid my financial losses ashore, I withdrew from the trade, with the idea of returning to the seductive West Indies, where I imagined there were higher-class operations to be conducted, and more thrilling times to be found. While I was disposing of my ships and finally closing up my Australian affairs, I was in Sydney for several weeks and stopped at the Imperial Hotel, where I met and became well acquainted with Guy Boothby, the English novelist. Though he dreamed away his inborn love of adventure, while I industriously practised mine and made it my life, he was a good deal of a kindred spirit, and in the course of our numerous long talks I told him enough about my experience with the Beautiful White Devil, without going into any of the detailed and intimate facts which have been told in these confessions, so that he subsequently wove a romance about her, using her sobriquet as a title for the story.

Accompanied by Leigh and Wilson, who were

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going only as far as England, I boarded a steamship for London, on my way back to New York. It would have been easier and quicker for me to have returned by way of San Francisco, but I involuntarily selected the roundabout way, to soon find that it led me into a unique and altogether unexpected experience.

CHAPTER XIII

ADVENTURES ON THE NILE

WHEN I finally forsook Australia, near the close of 1889, accompanied by Leigh and Wilson, who had paid a penitentiary penalty for my revengeful ambition and their own carelessness, I was in no particular hurry to get anywhere, but had no thought of stopping off at any point short of London until we reached Alexandria. Immediately on our arrival there I was suddenly seized with a freak of fancy, as we nonchalantly speak of the immutable decrees of Fate when we wish to show an independence of action we do not feel, to visit Cairo, and without waste of time and energy in mental argument I sent my dunnage ashore by one of the thousand or more small boats which viciously assaulted the ship from all sides. My two companions, after their trying times in Melbourne, were anxious to get back among their own people, so they went on to London, which decision was reached without the slightest effort to conceal their comments on my erratic disposition, while I proceeded to the ancient capital of the Kings of Egypt—those glorious old marauding monarchs

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who made despotism a fine art and graft a religion. There I was projected into a most alluringly adventurous undertaking. Though failing utterly of its high purpose, it was by no means devoid of compensations, for it initiated me far enough into the mysteries of departed days so that I considered myself at least an entered apprentice, and, furthermore, it carried me into close relationship with an exquisitely beautiful woman, which, next to plotting against peace and fighting out the plan, is always the thing most to be desired. As a matter of fact it is the rule in the Orient, where man is less virile and more devious and discreet than in the newer world, that a handsome woman is a part of every properly promoted plot, and this one was no exception.

Under my British name of George MacFarlane I stopped at Shepherd's Hotel, then the home of all pilgrims, and gave myself up to the enjoyment of new scenes while I waited, in no sense impatiently, for the development of the situation through whose coming I had been summoned. It was at the height of the tourist season, following the Christmas holidays, and there was an abundance of company, made up of cultured Europeans and a few Americans of gentle birth, for that was before Cairo was over-run with the over-rich. The time was delightfully whiled

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away for a month before anything happened to indicate the reason for my being there, but within less than half of that time I had renewed acquaintance with the man who was really the key to the situation, though I did not suspect it at the time. He and I had been strangely thrown together some years before, under conditions which provoked rather an intimate knowledge of each other, and when we met on the street one day the recognition was instant and mutual. He did not inquire into my business but simply asked what name I was travelling under, in order that he might not embarrass me. He stood in close and confidential relation to Tewfik Pasha, the Khedive, and on that account it is best that there should be no hint, even now, as to his name or nationality.

I wished to see the titular ruler of Egypt at close range, and through my old companion-in-arms I secured an invitation to the Khedive's annual ball at the Abdin Palace. This function, which naturally was the event of the year, was rendered impressive by all the artistry of the East, and it was a most brilliant spectacle. At the ends of every step in the long stairway leading up to the palace stood immobile footmen, who suggested past glories despite their costume, which was decidedly English, save for the

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ever-present fez. Inside, there was an endless succession of long mirrors set in the walls, which multiplied the jewels of the women and the gay uniforms of the officers and diplomats into a flashing mass of colors; countless palms scattered profusely through the large rooms, and gorgeous chandeliers illuminated with candles, but there was not so much as a hint of furniture. Had there been any place where the guests could lounge or sit, beyond the floor, the chances are that some of them would have stayed there until the next day, at least, in the absence of physical violence as an aid to their departure. The only ladies present were Europeans and some few favored Americans, but from wide corridors behind the musharabiyeh, or fretwork around the frieze of the walls, the Khedivah and her women attendants had a good view of the proceedings without danger of being seen. They were equally secure from any possibility of intrusion, for every avenue that led in their direction was guarded by offensively haughty eunuchs.

I was purposely close to the end of the long line of people who were presented to the Khedive, for I wanted to study him. He was about five and a half feet tall, with straight black hair, black moustache, an olive complexion, brown eyes that were more than

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alert, and a rather Roman nose, giving a Jewish cast to his face, which always wore a very bored expression except when he was interested. His hand was small but firm—such a hand as would commit murder if the owner were sure it would not be found out. There was nothing of the brave man in his looks or actions. Polite and insinuating by nature, he was never born to lead. Rather, he suggested the favorite and tool of the Sultan, who would take some small chance of losing his head with a sufficiently large reward in the other side of the scale. He wore that night, and always, a single-breasted frock coat, like that of an Episcopal clergyman. He spoke English correctly but with an accent, and aversion as well; French he loved and spoke like a Parisian. I had been given advance information on this point, so when I was introduced, following a string of Englishmen and Americans, I addressed him in French. Instantly the weary look vanished and his face lighted up until he became almost handsome.

“Ah,” he exclaimed, as he gripped my hand with more force than I had previously seen him display, “you are a Frenchman. I am delighted.”

I made some polite reply and he went on, almost excitedly, “I love the French language, but I do not like the English. I speak it only because I have to.

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The Khedivah is more fortunate. She does not speak it at all, and she never will learn it."

We exchanged commonplaces for a moment and I passed on, wondering to what extent England could trust this man, who hated her tongue and made no secret of it.

Cairo has been described so often and in so many ways by people who had nothing better to write about that I have no wish to add to the literature on that subject, but I cannot refrain from speaking, in passing, of one unusual scene which, so far as I have read, has for all of these years escaped the attention of literary loiterers. With my mind far back in centuries that are forgotten, in lands devoid of imperishable monuments like those around me, I had stayed on the summit of Cheops so long, one afternoon, that my dragoman declared I would have trouble in reaching the bottom before dark. Half-way down I paused for a glimpse at Cairo, with every minaret standing out boldly in the strong light. Then, suddenly, almost at my feet, the sinking sun created the shadow of the Great Pyramid, and it began to move. It advanced almost imperceptibly, at first, but gathered headway quickly and in a moment it was rushing across the twelve-mile plain toward the city with the speed of an express train, as it seemed to me; I am

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sure no race horse could have kept pace with it. When the shadow reached the Mokattam Hills it paused for an instant and then began, slowly and more slowly and with apparent difficulty, to climb the high side of the Citadel Mosque. When it was half-way up the wall the sun dropped out of sight like a shot and we were buried in Egyptian darkness, which, be it said, is no simple figure of speech. In a few minutes, however, we were able to complete our descent of the gigantic steps by the light of the brilliant afterglow, which spread its soft radiance over the land.

As I was enjoying my after-dinner cigar one evening in a quiet corner of the garden in front of the hotel, I was approached by three women pedlers, apparently of the fellah class. They wore the common blue kimono-like garment, held together seemingly by luck, and their small black veils were thrown over their heads, leaving their faces bare and thus placing them outside the pale of Egyptian respectability. I was about to walk away to avoid their pestering, when my eyes met those of the one who was in the lead, and instantly I was attracted in place of being repelled. Great, brilliant eyes they were; not fickle and flirtatious, like those of the thinly veiled beauties of the harem who were seen in their coupes on the Shoobra Road every afternoon, nor

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sullen or sensuous, like those of the class to which her garb gave her claim; but steady and sincere, wide-open and frank, and in them shone a light that converted into specks the lanterns with which the grounds were illuminated. Such eyes do not come in one generation, not even by chance, nor are they born of the soil. Her face was of the pure Egyptian type, gentle in its contour and refined in every line, with perfectly arched eyebrows and a mass of hair as black as her eyes, and her easy carriage emphasized the grace of her tall, lithe figure, the curves of which not even her coarse robe could entirely conceal.

Her sparkling eyes, turned full on me and ignoring all else, told me as plainly as words could have done that she had some message for me, and, suspecting that the moment for which I had been waiting for weeks had arrived, I walked slowly toward her, as though in a mood to barter. As we met, seemingly somewhat disconcerted by my steady gaze of profound and unconcealed admiration, she drew her uncouth veil across her face and held out her hands, like one trained to tourist trade, that I might examine her wonderful rings. Those hands could never have known work, they were so soft and small, and arms more perfectly rounded were never modelled in marble

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by a master. Plainly this woman was not of the servant class, to which her companions as clearly belonged. One of her hands was half-closed and as she laid it in mine it opened and a small piece of folded paper fell into my palm. Long accustomed to ways out of the ordinary, I gave no sign, beyond an involuntary start which she felt but no one else noticed, and proceeded with outward calmness, and assuredly with much deliberation, to select a ring, which I purchased as a souvenir of our first meeting. It was set with an uncut ruby in a band of gold so fine that it was removed from her tiny finger, which it encircled nearly twice, simply by pressing the ends outward. Not a word passed between us except as to the price of the ring, over which there was no haggling. The women who were with her made a pretence of showing me their wares, but it was only a show for the benefit of any inquisitive persons who might be watching, and without urging me to buy they passed on. I strolled after them and was interested in observing that as they approached other guests the woman who had slipped me the note remained in the background, with her face veiled, leaving commerce to her companions. They attempted to make only a few sales and then disappeared.

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Curious to a degree that surprised me, as to the contents of the communication which had come to me so strangely, but fearful of being watched, by I knew not whom, it was some time before I went to my room to read the note by the light of a tallow candle. The mysterious missive read: "You are Captain Boynton. Are you willing to undertake a difficult and perhaps dangerous mission? Answer to-morrow night through the channel by which you receive this."

Here was a romantic promise of something new and real in the way of excitement, for I could imagine nothing stereotyped growing out of such an unusual beginning, and I rejoiced. The answer to the inspiring invitation, which I promptly burned from discretion while sentiment told me to keep it, required no thought, and as I am not much given to the exertion of energy in seeking solutions for difficult problems that will soon supply their own answers, I did not greatly concern myself as to the purpose of the plot in which I was sought as a partner. Inasmuch as the only man in Cairo who knew me as Captain Boynton, and who was acquainted with my favorite occupation, was a confidant of the Khedive, it naturally occurred to me that the oily Tewfik Pasha was mixed up in it in some way, and I sus-

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pected that it involved another secret movement against British rule in Egypt. The latter suspicion was soon verified and there never has been any doubt in my own mind that I was equally correct in the conjecture as to the participation, or at least the silent approval, of Tewfik, but this could not be proved.

Knowing the mystery-loving nature of the Egyptians and feeling sure that if left wholly to their own ways they would entertain themselves with a long correspondence which could do no good and might arouse suspicion, I determined to bring matters to a head as quickly as possible. It was evident that those who sought my services knew much about me and it was quite as important to me that I should know them. The next evening, before going down to dinner, I wrote my answer. "Yes," I replied to the encouraging query, "provided it is something a gentleman can do, and I am well paid for it. But I will conduct no negotiations in this way. I must see the people I am doing business with."

After dinner I retired to the same out-of-the-way corner of the garden in which I had been found the night before, on the side farthest away from the hotel and the music, to await developments. It probably was not long, but it seemed hours, before the same

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three women came up the short flight of steps running down to the street. The one who was doing duty as a letter carrier, and who bore the imaginative name of Ialla, was the last to appear. On reaching the level of the garden her eyes roamed quickly around until they turned toward where I was sitting. Seeing me, she drew her veil across her face, as though she resented being classed with the unregenerate fellahin, and wished to show more discrimination in her love affairs than they could boast, and accompanied her companions in their ostensible bargaining tour among the guests. To one who paid them even casual attention they must have appeared as timid traders, so lacking were they in the customary insistence, and it was with small profits and no great loss of time that they found their way around to me. As on the night before, it was left to Ialla to barter with me. I again took both of her hands in mine, to examine her jewelry, of which she wore a wealth that, like her looks, belied her dress, and as I did so I slipped into one of them the tightly folded note which I had been gripping for an hour or more. Her jewels were much richer than those she had worn the previous evening and as I studied their barbaric beauty I softly pressed her childish hands, as the only means of conveying something of the im-

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pression she had made on me, for I did not know the extent to which the other women were in our secret or could be trusted. Her only response was one quick glance, which I interpreted as a mixture of pleasure, surprise, and interrogation; the one distinctly pleasant thing about it was that it contained nothing of indignation or hostility. Save for that electric flash her wonderful eyes looked modestly downward and her whole attitude was one of perfect propriety, which more than ever convinced me that she was not what she pretended to be. Finally she drew her hands away, hurriedly but gently, and with an impatient gesture, as though she had made up her mind that I had no idea of making a purchase, led her companions out of the garden.

There was no sign of either Ialla or her two friends the next evening, though I watched for them closely. On the second afternoon I received a call from my old friend, who undoubtedly had recommended me and vouched for me to the people who had opened up the exceedingly interesting correspondence. It was apparently a casual visit but its purpose was revealed when, in the course of a general conversation regarding the country and its ways, along which he had cleverly piloted me, he said: "These Egyptians are a remarkable people. I have lived among them

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long enough to know them and to admire, particularly, their sublime religious faith and their exalted sense of honor. With their enemies, and with the travellers on whom they prey, they are tricky and evasive to the last degree, but in their dealings with people whom they know and trust they are the most honorable men in the world. I don't know whether you expect to have any dealings with them, but if you do, you can trust them absolutely."

With that opening I was on the point of speaking to him about the note I had received and answered, but before I could say a word he had started off on another subject, leaving me to understand that he knew all about the matter but did not wish to talk of it, and that he had taken that method, learned from the diplomats, of endorsing the people with whom he had put me in communication. We gossiped on for some time, but though each knew what was uppermost in the other's mind neither of us spoke of it, nor was the subject even indirectly referred to again.

This conversation indicated that the veiled proceedings were nearing the point of a personal interview with some one who knew something about the scheme, and when I took my seat in the garden that evening I was impatient for further unfoldings. Not knowing what might happen, and despite the

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afternoon's guarantee of good faith from a man I had every reason to trust, I took the precaution to arm myself with two Tranter revolvers. I had not been waiting long when Ialla and her two companions appeared and came straight toward me, but without any sign of recognition. As she passed close beside me, walking slowly, Ialla whispered, almost in my ear: "Follow me at ten o'clock."

It was then about nine-thirty. The inharmonious trio moved on into the throng of guests and, as the time passed, gradually worked their way around toward the stairway leading down to the street. A few minutes before ten I descended into the street to wait for them, so it could not be seen from the hotel that I was following them. Promptly on the hour Ialla and her attendants came down the steps and set off toward Old Cairo, which, however much it may have been spoiled since, was then just the same as when Haroun-al-Raschid used to take his midnight rambles. At the corner of the hotel two men dressed as servants stepped out of a shadow and fell in close behind them, apparently to prevent me from engaging them in conversation, which, but for this barrier, I assuredly would have done. With all amorous advances thus discouraged I remained far enough behind so that it would not appear that I

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was one of the party. They led me almost the full length of the Mooshka, the main street of the old town and the only one wide enough to permit the passing of two carriages; turned into one of the narrow side streets, then into another and another until they stopped at last in front of a door at the side of one of the little shops. When I was within perhaps fifty feet of them Ialla entered the door, after looking back at me, while her four companions walked rapidly on down the street. I pushed open the door, which was immediately closed by a servant who dropped a bar across it, and found Ialla waiting for me in a dimly lighted hallway. She led me nearly to the end of the long hall, opened a door and motioned to me to enter and closed the door from the outside. I found myself in a large room, which, after my eyes had become accustomed to the half light, I saw was magnificently furnished. A fine-looking old Arab, with gray hair and beard, was seated on an ottoman, smoking a bubble pipe. His bearing was majestic and for the purpose of easy identification he will be known here as Regal, though that was not his name.

"I am glad to see you, Pasha Boynton," was his greeting, in a deep, strong voice. He proved himself a man of action, and advanced himself greatly in my esteem by giving no time to idle chatter. "We

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know you well," he said, "through trustworthy information, as a soldier and a sailor, and we believe you are peculiarly well equipped for the work we wish you to undertake. It is a sea-going expedition, involving danger of disaster on one hand and the cause of liberty and a substantial reward on the other. Are you willing to attempt it?"

"If you are open to reasonable terms and I am given full command of the expedition, I will gladly undertake it," I replied. "If it furnishes real adventure I will be quite willing to accept that in part payment for my services."

"Then we should be able to agree without difficulty," he answered with a grim smile. "But," he added, as his keen face took on a stern expression and his eyes looked through mine into my brain, "whether or not we do reach an agreement, we can rely on you to keep our secret and to drop no hint or word through which it might be revealed?"

"Absolutely," I replied, and my gaze was as steady as his. He studied me intently for a full minute and then said decisively, in the Arabic fashion: "It is good."

Without further ceremony he let me into the whole plot. At the bottom of it was the old cry of "Egypt for the Egyptians," which is not yet dead and prob-

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ably will not die for centuries, if ever. It was Arabi Pasha who made the last desperate fight under this slogan and it was his release from exile that was sought by the plotters, in order that he might renew the war for native liberty. As a military genius Arabi ranked almost with the great Ibrahim Pasha, who died a few years after Arabi was born, and he was fanatical in his love of country. From a Colonel in the army he became Under Secretary of War and then Minister of War, in which position he was practically the Dictator of Egypt. With the aid of a secret society which he organized among the native officers of the army, and the carefully concealed support of the Sultan, who had protested vainly against the assumption of authority by the British and French over this part of Turkish territory, he planned and executed a revolt through which it was hoped to restore native control of Egypt. The French, more sentimental than selfish, and reluctant to take extreme measures, withdrew at the last moment, leaving it to the British to prosecute the war, which they did with characteristic vigor. The bombardment of Alexandria, on July 11 and 12, 1882, and the rout of his army at Tel-el-Kebir two months later, dissipated Arabi's dream and, so far as surface indications were concerned, established British rule in Egypt, exclu-

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sively and permanently. The movement which Arabi had fostered apparently collapsed with that battle, and he was exiled to Ceylon for life.

Briefly and bitterly this bit of history was reviewed by the old Arab. Then he became more animated. He said the loyal Egyptians had been planning a new movement against the British, with great secrecy, for a long time, and that the natives and a large part of the army were ready to rise in revolt whenever the signal was given. The butchery of the gallant "Chinese" Gordon at Khartoum—a stain on England's fame which never can be blotted out—had checked the British advance in the Soudan and to some extent paralyzed the officials who, from the safe haven of the War Office in London, were drawing up plans of conquest, and the conspirators believed the time had come for what they were confident would prove a successful and final blow for freedom. But, to make this ardently desired result more certain, they needed the inspiring leadership of Arabi Pasha, in whose talent for conflict they still had great faith, which doubtless was intensified by his enforced absence. Furthermore, Regal explained, the superstitious natives would hail his unexpected return from exile as a sign that they could not be defeated and would fight more desperately and deter-

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minedly than before. Through spies it had been learned that Arabi was confined at a point near the coast, only a short distance from Colombo, the capital of Ceylon. He was allowed considerable freedom, within certain prescribed limits, and was in the custody of only a small guard. His escape was regarded as impossible and the idea that an attempt might be made to rescue him seemingly had not entered the minds of those responsible for his safe-keeping.

Yet that was precisely what I was asked to accomplish. After Regal had stated the conditions of Arabi's captivity he dramatically declared, with flashing eyes: "The fires which the British foolishly thought they had stamped out, were not, and could never be, extinguished. They have been smouldering ever since and are now ready to burst into a flame that will consume everything before it. We need only the presence of the great Arabi. You can bring him to us. With a ship, whose true mission is concealed by methods of which we know you to be a master, you can sail to a point close to his place of confinement. As soon as it is dark and quiet forty or fifty of our brave men, who will accompany you, will be landed. They will steal upon his guards and silence them and return with the General to your ship. There will be none left to give the alarm and

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by the time it is discovered that he has been snatched away from their cursed hands you will be far out of sight, and with your knowledge of the ways of those who sail the sea it should not be difficult for you to avoid capture. You will land Arabi at some point to be decided on, from which he can make his way to Cairo. With his coming our banners will be unfurled and Egypt will be restored to the Egyptians. It is a mission in the cause of freedom and humanity. Are you willing to undertake it?"

Long before he reached it, I saw his objective point, and ran the whole scheme over in my mind while he was laying down its principles. It did not strike me as being at all foolhardy. As I have said before, it is the so-called impossibilities which, when they are not really impossible, as few of them are, can be most easily accomplished, for the reason that they are not guarded against. Under the conditions described, the rescue of Arabi would be comparatively a simple matter. The chief danger would come from the British warships which would swarm the seas as soon as his disappearance was discovered, for it would be a natural conclusion that he was on some vessel on his way back to Egypt. This danger appealed to me, for it augured well for adventure. It would be a game of hide-and-seek, such as I in-

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tensely enjoyed, with my wits pitted against those of the British Navy, and with my varied experiences in deep-sea deception, I did not consider that the odds against me would be overwhelming. Therefore I promptly assured the old patriot, whose anxiety and excitement were shown in his blazing eyes, that I would cheerfully assume responsibility for Arabi's rescue and his safe delivery at almost any point that might be designated.

"It is good," he replied, slowly and impressively. "Egypt will be free."

Profoundly wishing that the noble little "Leck-with" was at my service instead of at the bottom of the sea, I added that I had no ship and it would be necessary to purchase one, as it would be impracticable to charter a vessel for such a purpose. This meant that the expedition would require some financing, in addition to the charge for my services. With a gesture which indicated that everything was settled in his mind and that it was only necessary for me to name my terms to have them agreed to, Regal said he anticipated no difficulty on that point and suggested that I return the next afternoon or evening to meet his associates, who comprised the inner circle of the revolutionary party. I told him I would be glad to

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come at any hour but I doubted that I could find my way through the labyrinth of narrow streets.

"How has the person who guided you here conducted herself?" he asked.

"Irreproachably."

"She will signal you to-morrow afternoon or evening. Follow her."

With that he arose, terminating the interview; we solemnly shook hands and he escorted me to the door. I was wondering how I should find the way back to my hotel when I descried Ialla and her four shadows waiting for me a short distance down the street. Without a word they showed me the course until I made out the hotel, when they disappeared down a side street.

I was lounging in the garden early the next afternoon, for there was no telling when the summons might come and I would take no chance of missing it. It was about four o'clock, at which hour all Cairo was on parade and the crowd was thickest around the hotel, that Ialla and her faithful female guards entered the lively scene. Her face was almost entirely hidden by her veil but there was no mistaking her eyes. They caught mine and a quick little beckoning motion, which no one else would have noticed, told me to follow her. She soon left, walking slowly, and

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I took up the trail, restraining myself with an effort from approaching her more closely than wisdom dictated. Avoiding the crowded Mooshka they led me, by a more circuitous route, back to the house where I had been so agreeably entertained the night before, and which was entered in the same way. Regal was waiting for me and with him were five of his countrymen, to whom I was introduced *en bloc*. They were dignified and reserved but sharp-eyed and vigorous and they looked like fighters of the first water. They were much younger than Regal and evidently, from the deference shown him, he was the chief conspirator.

"These," he said, with a courtly wave of his hand toward the others, "are the relatives and companions-in-arms of Arabi Pasha and the men who, with me, are directing our operations. They are perfectly responsible, as you will see, and in every way entitled to your confidence, as you are worthy of theirs."

With this formal assurance we sat down to a detailed discussion of the project. They told me of their plans, as Regal had previously explained them in a general way, and professed confidence that with Arabi in personal command of their forces, and with the active coöperation of the Soudanese, which was assured, they would drive the hated British out of

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Egypt, and keep them out. Their knowledge of the surroundings at Arabi's place of confinement and their plan for overpowering his guards and securing his release, which was complete to the slaughter of the last man, showed an intimate acquaintance with conditions that surprised me. From all they told me on this point I gained the idea that they were working in harmony with their brother Mohammedans in India, and that the latter were planning a similar uprising when the conditions were judged to be opportune. Developments since then have strengthened this belief into a conviction. It is never wise to predict, but when England some day becomes involved in a war with a first-class power, like Germany for instance, which will tax her fighting forces to the limit, there need be no surprise if the natives of Egypt and India rise simultaneously and become their own masters.

It was urged by them and agreed that I should take no part in the actual rescue of Arabi but remain on the ship, to guard against any surprise by water and to be ready to steam westward as soon as the party returned. I was to stand in close to the shore just after dark, with all lights doused, and it was thought that Arabi would be safe on board long enough before sunrise so that we could be well clear

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of the land by daylight. The point at which Arabi was to be landed caused considerable discussion. As the British were certain to promptly patrol the Red Sea, with all of the warships that could be hurried into it, and closely guard the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, it was tentatively decided that the safest and wisest course would be to put him ashore near Jibuti, on friendly French soil, from which point he could pick a pathway through Abyssinia and down the Nile, with little danger of detection and with the advantage of being able to arouse the enthusiasm of the Soudanese and other tribes through which he passed. I was in favor of running the gantlet of the Strait and landing him two or three hundred miles south of the Gulf of Suez, which would expedite the revolt and also make things more exciting, but the others feared this would expose him too much to the danger of recapture. They were for the surest way and said that more reckless methods could wait until he was at the head of his troops. This conclusion as to the landing place, however, was not final. It was understood that I would receive definite instructions when I put in at Saukin, on the way out, to take on the fifty proud and trusted warriors who were to effect the release of their revered leader.

The fact that consideration of terms was the last

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question brought up was a delicate compliment to my supposed fairness which I appreciated. Instead of asking them for fifty thousand pounds, as I had intended to, I stipulated only forty thousand, one-half of which was to be advanced to me for the purchase of a suitable ship. The ship was, of course, to be turned over to them at the conclusion of the expedition. I was to pay all expenses and collect the remaining twenty thousand pounds after Arabi had been landed. If they had fixed the terms themselves they could not have agreed to them more readily, and I was asked to return at ten o'clock the next evening for the initial payment.

Our negotiations thus rapidly concluded, I was invited to remain to dinner, which is the crowning honor of Egyptian confidence and hospitality. I needed no urging and never have I enjoyed a meal more. The table-talk was general, but running all through it was the love of freedom and the plan through which they hoped to realize their passion. Their interest in American affairs was only that called for by courtesy, but they made me tell many stories of our wars with England, from which they derived much satisfaction.

"We are as much entitled to our freedom as you are," declared one of my hosts, whose green turban

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indicated that he could trace his ancestry back to Mahomet, "and we will win ours in the end, just as your people won theirs. We may be a strange people," he added, reflectively, "but we are not so bad as we have been painted. The *howadji* [strangers] condemn our religion without understanding it and preach to us another, which, so far as we can observe from its practices, falls far short of our own. Mohammedanism needs no defence from me, but I will tell you just one thing about it. If you were now to murder my brother I could not lay hands on you or harm you, for you have eaten of my salt, but not even Mahomet could make me cease to hate you in my heart. Does the Christian religion, of which the British are so proud, teach you that?"

I confessed that it did n't, so far as I had information or belief, and made my sincere salaams to his faith. If I am ever to become afflicted with any religious beliefs, I hope they will be those taught by Mahomet.

When I finally started back to my hotel Ialla and her attendants were waiting for me in the alley, for it was not wide enough to be called a street. They started on ahead, but we had gone only a few short blocks when her four companions walked briskly away and she waited for me, in a shadow so deep

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that I at first thought she had entered one of the queer houses and my spirits fell, to be revived a moment later when I almost ran into her.

"How did your business turn out?" she inquired anxiously, as I bowed low before her. Her voice, which I had been longing to hear, was soft and clear, as well became her, and her radiant beauty shone forth through the darkness.

"Thanks to your cleverness," I replied, "it has turned out well."

"Then you are going to rescue my uncle," she exclaimed delightedly. Her sparkling eyes flamed with excitement and, as if to seal the compact, she extended her hand, which I first pressed and then kissed. Then I slipped it through my arm and started to walk out of the shadow into the moonlight, and she accompanied me without protest.

She had exchanged her cotton robe for one of silk, which was much more fitting, and as I looked down on her I thought her the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. If I had held the same opinion as to others of her sex I was not reminded of it then, and there was no manner of doubt that I was deeply in love with her. We walked long and talked much, and some of it was interesting. She told me, though it did not need the telling, that she was a lady and

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that she had risked her reputation and exposed herself to coarsest insult by appearing in public unveiled and dressed as a servant, out of love for her uncle and devotion to his cause. To prevent suspicion it had been determined that communication should be opened with me through a woman, and she had volunteered for the service. She said she had seen me at the Khedive's reception, which she had witnessed through the fretwork from the apartments of the Khedivah—from which it appeared that I had been under consideration by the revolutionary leaders for several weeks before I was approached—and so she knew the man to whom the introductory note was to be delivered. The two women servants, who could not be trusted with such confidential correspondence, accompanied her for the double purpose of protecting her as much as possible and carrying out the peddling pretence. This explained why she had kept in the background and covered her face with her scraggly veil most of the time. On her first visit, she said, she had fully exposed her face so that I might see she was not of the class of her companions and be the more willing to hold commercial converse with her; in her heart she knew her beauty would attract me, wherein she displayed an abundantly justifiable confidence in her charms, but she expressed it with-

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out the words or style of vanity. Except for that brief period when she was altogether unveiled she said she really did not have great fear of being discovered, for it was unlikely that any of her friends would be around the hotel at the hours when she went there, and, even if they did see her, it was improbable that they would recognize her in fellahin attire. As a matter of fact, she confessed, as we became better acquainted, she had entered into the plot not only through love for her distinguished uncle, to whom she was devoted, but from a liking for doing things that were out of the ordinary.

It was this same spirit which induced her, on the night of my first opportunity to tell her of her beauty and my fervid love for her, to bribe her servants to disappear for a time. By the light of the Egyptian moon, which would inspire even a lout of a lover, I told her, in words that burned, of the passion she had implanted within me by the first glance of her wonderful eyes, and I was encouraged by the fact that she seemed more sympathetic than otherwise. We walked for hours through deserted streets that were far from lonely until at last we came to a corner near the hotel where her attendants were waiting for her, patiently, I presumed, from their natures, but whether patiently or not was of no concern to me.

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The next night I found my way alone to Regal's abode and received the first payment of twenty thousand pounds, in Paris exchange. There was a final conference, at which all of the details were gone over again as a precaution against any misunderstanding, and I took my departure with many good wishes. Ialla and her two women attendants were waiting for me, as had been arranged, and my love-making was resumed where I had left off on the preceding night. Ialla was more responsive than before, but when I urged her to go with me to France or marry me at once in Cairo she would not listen. Finally she said: "After you have rescued my uncle I will go with you anywhere, but not until then will I think of marriage."

Nothing could move her from that decision. I arranged to meet her the next night and the one following, and several others, which she accomplished by the popular method of bribing her attendants, but, though it was a joy to her to be told of my love there was no way by which she could be induced to yield to it until her uncle was free. Finally she regretfully insisted that I must leave, for her relatives, she said, were becoming seriously disturbed over the fact that I had remained so long in Cairo, instead of going about the important business at hand. In my in-

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fatuation I had forgotten discretion and my promise to conduct the expedition with all possible speed. Even when this was brought home to me it required all of my will power to say *au revoir* to the beautiful Ialla, though I expected to see her soon again and hold her to her promise.

I went to Marseilles and called on a *huissier d'marine*, or ship broker, named Oliviera, to whom I had been recommended. After looking over several ships that were for sale I bought "L'Hirondelle" (The Swallow), a coasting steamer of eight hundred tons that had been running between Marseilles and Citta Vecchia, the port of Rome. She was old but in good condition and could do seventeen knots or better. I took command of the ship and my first and second officers were Leigh and Wilson, who came down from London in response to a telegram, bringing with them half a dozen men whom I knew could be trusted. The crew was filled out with Frenchmen and we headed for Suakin, far down on the Egyptian side of the Red Sea. There I was to receive final instructions and pick up the Arabs who were to do the manual labor, and whatever assassination was necessary, in connection with Arabi's restoration to his countrymen. As soon as we were in the Red Sea I stripped off the ship's French name, rechristened

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her the "Adventure," hoisted the British flag over her, and gave her a forged set of papers in keeping with her name and nationality.

At Suakin one of the great surprises of my life awaited me. We had scarcely tied up when the man from whom I was to receive the warriors came aboard with a letter from Regal directing me to turn the ship over to him and discharge the crew. The agent could not understand the change of plan any more than I could, and I could not even guess as to the cause, but he was there to obey orders and there was nothing else for me to do. I could not make any kind of a formal protest without revealing something concerning my mission, which I would not do, and, besides that, the ship did not belong to me. Feeling sure there would be a satisfactory explanation waiting for me at Cairo I returned there, after paying off the crew and sending them back to Marseilles and London in charge of Leigh and Wilson.

I was still more mystified when, on reaching Cairo, I was unable to find Regal, Ialla, or any one else connected with the undertaking, nor could I get the slightest trace of them. I located the house in which I had been so charmingly admitted into the conspiracy, but the people living there were strangers, so far as I was permitted to observe or could ascer-

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tain, and they insisted they knew nothing at all concerning the previous occupants. If I could have searched the house I might have found out differently, but that was out of the question. Here was Egyptian mystery beyond what I had bargained for. It was as though I had been roughly awakened from a delightfully realistic dream. The only theory on which I could explain the puzzle was that the government had in some way learned of the plot, in consequence of which every one identified with it had disappeared, leaving it to me to take the hint and do likewise. In the hope of seeing Ialla again and determined to secure some definite clue as to just what had happened in my absence, I waited around for two weeks or more, until I encountered the old friend who, I knew, was responsible for my connection with the conspiracy. I did not dissemble, as I had before, but took him to my room, told him the riddle, and asked him the answer. I did not expect him to admit anything and was not disappointed. What he said, in substance, was this: "Of course I know nothing about the plot of which you have told me. If what you say is true I should say that you have been making something of a fool of yourself over this Ialla and that you have only yourself to blame for the abrupt ending which seems to have been reached.

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You are very shrewd and far-sighted and I will admit that ordinarily you are not much moved by sentiment, but this black-eyed beauty seems to have carried you off your feet. These women are the greatest flirts in the world. There is nothing they enjoy so much as clandestine meetings at which they can listen to passionate protestations of love, and when these come from a foreigner their cup of happiness is full. You thought Ialla was in love with you, but she was only having a good time with you, and she has taken a lot of pride in telling her friends about your meetings at their afternoon gatherings in the old cemetery for the exchange of gossip. She had no idea of marrying you, an unbeliever, you may be sure of that. It may be that she thought she was stimulating you to deeds of heroism in the rescue of her uncle, but, if she considered that at all, it was a secondary matter. The men you were dealing with have the contempt of their race for all women. They cannot understand how any man can become so enamoured of a woman, no matter how beautiful, as to let it interfere with his business. When a man who, for the time being, has the leading role in a prospective revolution, so far forgets himself as to waste a week of valuable time in running after a flirtatious female they are quite likely to conclude

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that he is too foolish and reckless to be trusted with such an important matter. They would argue that no man who could be relied on to carry out their plan would display such lack of judgment. It is possible that there may be some other reason for the situation in which you find yourself, but I doubt it. The wisest course for you is to tell me how you can be reached, and leave Cairo, for you can gain nothing by staying here. It is known to many persons that I know you and if any one should want to get in communication with you, I will be able to tell him how to do it."

Possessing all the pride of a full-blooded man, I resented the calm assertion that I had been ensnared by a flirt, and a somewhat acrimonious argument followed, but, in looking back at it now, I am willing to admit that probably my friend was right about it. Perhaps Ialla was not, after all, the perfect woman that, under the magic spell of her marvellous beauty, I imagined her to be, and possibly if I had not surrendered so suddenly to her charms Arabi Pasha might have been freed and Egypt might now be an Empire. Whether or not that is true, I have no regrets on the subject, except that I never saw Ialla again. My moonlight meetings with her were, at

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least, a diversion, and they gave me great enjoyment while they lasted.

Though it went against the grain I was compelled to admit that my friend's advice was the best I could get, and I reluctantly followed it. Feeling that for once my destiny had played it a bit low down on me I crossed the Mediterranean and took a French liner for New York. I had spent four months and much money in studying the Sphinx, but I did not count them as lost. Ialla's loveliness was in my mind for a long time and while it remained I cherished the hope that I would be recalled to carry out the plan for the rescue of her uncle, but the summons never came. Eleven years later Arabi was pardoned and returned to Egypt, but his influence among his own people was gone; the fact that he had accepted a pardon implied, to their astute minds, a secret agreement with their enemies and caused him to be regarded as a tool of the British. But, as very recent events have demonstrated, the fires of freedom are still burning, and now and again signal smoke is seen rising over India.

CHAPTER XIV

RAPID-FIRE REVOLTS

THE friendliness of Fate, in throwing me in the way of adventures which were beyond my discernment, was never more plainly evidenced than on my return to New York from Australia and Egypt in 1890. On the trip across the Atlantic my mind had wandered away from the West Indies and I experienced an increasing desire to return to South America, but one of the first things I heard on my arrival was that my old friend Guzman Blanco had finally been shorn of his supreme power in Venezuela only a few months before. He had been betrayed by his friends, after the established fashion of that captivating country, and Dr. Anduesa Palacio, one of his enemies of years, had been made President with the approval and assistance of Dr. Rojas Paul, the dummy whom Guzman had left as titular head of the government while he was revelling in Paris, his foreign capital. This discouraged me for a time in my half-formed plan to return to my Southern stamping ground, and as I had plenty of money and was not averse to a rest, I concluded to wait around, Micaw-

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ber like, for something to turn up. But it was not long until a silent voice began calling me to South America; softly, at first, and then so loudly that it came as a command. I had heard the same sort of an order before, and only very recently, and was not disposed to disregard it. I felt sure it would not lead me into disappointment twice in succession.

Without knowing where or how the cruise would end, but confident it would lead to trouble—though I did not imagine how much of it there really would be or how unpleasant it would prove—I bought the “Alice Ada,” a brigantine of three hundred tons, laid her on with Thos. Norton & Sons, and got a general cargo for Rosario, Brazil, on the River Parava. From Rosario I went one hundred miles up the river to St. Stephens and took on a cargo of wheat for Rio Janiero. As soon as I had looked around a little in Rio, while the cargo was being unloaded, I understood why I had gone there, for my expectant eye distinguished signs of a nice little revolution which was just being shaped up. These indications, though somewhat vague to even an experienced new arrival, were so encouraging in their promise of exciting events that I sold my ship and took quarters at the Hotel Freitas to watch developments. I had not long to wait before the young republic celebrated its first

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revolution, but it was accomplished in such a disgracefully quiet way, and in such marked contrast with that sort of proceeding in Venezuela, and in Central America and the West Indies, that I was thoroughly disgusted with the country and was tempted to move on again into new fields. A land in which the government is changed by the force of public sentiment alone, and without the booming of cannon and the bursting of bombs, has no charm for me.

When the last Emperor of Brazil, Dom Pedro II, was dragged out of bed at night and deported without the firing of a shot, in the "Peaceful Revolution" of November 15, 1889, Deodoro da Fonseca was made President by the lovers of liberty and equality, which purely imaginary conditions of life never will be found in any country. Before his weakness had become apparent he was made Constitutional President and Floriano Peixotto was elected Vice-President. Deodoro had neither the firmness nor the initiative that the situation demanded. His policy was weak and vacillating and his popularity waned rapidly. The revolution which was in the process of formation when I arrived on the scene was, I discovered, being quietly fomented by Floriano, the Vice-President. He soon had the army at his back

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and, as the people were beginning to clamor for him, it was an easy matter to gain the support of Admiral Mello, the ranking officer of the Brazilian Navy, and Admiral Soldanha da Gama, commandant of the naval academy. They brought matters to a head on the morning of November 23, 1891. Mello took up a position at the foot of the main street of Rio in the cruiser "Riachuelo," the finest ship in the navy, trained his guns on the palace of Itumary, and sent word to Deodoro that he would open fire on him in two hours if he did not abdicate in favor of Floriano. Deodoro abdicated in two minutes, and dropped dead soon afterward from heart disease, and Floriano was proclaimed President.

Before he had time to get his new chair well warmed he had a row with Mello, and as soon as I heard of it I foresaw another revolution, which pleasing prospect prompted me to remain in Brazil, for I did not believe it could possibly prove as uninteresting as those that had preceded it. Mello regarded himself as the President-maker and considered that he was rightfully entitled to be the power behind the throne. However, Floriano was not at all constituted for the role of a mere figurehead and he made it plain to Mello that while he might make courteous suggestions and even give friendly advice, he could

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not go an inch beyond that. Floriano was really a remarkable man. He was perhaps one-half Indian and the rest corrupted Portuguese; sixty years old, with clear, brown eyes and iron gray hair and whiskers. A strong, fine character he was; perfectly fearless, absolutely honest and devoted to his country, whose interests he greatly advanced. He was proud of his Indian blood, which he made a synonyme for courage and fairness, and often referred to it. He was the best President I have ever known, not excepting even the great Guzman.

Mello was a younger man and more of a Spaniard in his blood and his characteristics. He had considerable bravery, of the kind that is best displayed in the presence of a large audience, but he was impetuous and at times foolish. He was abnormally ambitious and believed in a rule or ruin policy. At that, he was more a man after my own heart, for he stood for revolt and anarchy, while Floriano stood for law and order. Soldanha da Gama, the third figure in the drama, was a strange mixture of naval ability, cowardice, and theatrical bravery.

When Floriano refused to be dictated to or even influenced in his views as to what was best for Brazil, Mello proceeded to plot against him with even more earnestness than he had displayed in the plans to

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overthrow Deodoro. He worked chiefly among the naval officers, the aristocrats, the adherents of Dom Pedro, and the Catholic clergy, and in the end they all became his allies. He was unable to shake the army, though he tried repeatedly to create dissatisfaction among the troops, and the influence of the priests was minimized by the fact that the people generally were blindly in love with the new scheme of self-government, which sounded well and appealed strongly to their sentimental natures, and were loyal to Floriano.

As Mello's plot shaped up I began to suspect that his real purpose was to restore Dom Pedro to the throne and make himself the power behind it. Mello cared nothing for titles; it was his ambition to be the dictator of Brazil, with power as absolute as that which Guzman Blanco had exercised for many years in Venezuela. It was natural for him to suppose that if he reëstablished the Empire under its old ruler, Dom Pedro would be so grateful to him, and to him alone, that he would be thoroughly subservient to his influence. Later events confirmed me not only in the belief that this was what was in Mello's mind, but that he had an understanding with Dom Pedro and, through him, with several European rulers, who were keenly anxious to see the "divine right of kings"

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perpetuated in South America. Mello considered that the dictator to an Emperor would have more power than the dictator to a President, and he may have even dreamed that he would some day take the throne himself and establish a new dynasty. Dom Pedro had issued a protest against his deposition as soon as he reached Europe, in which all the princes of Coburg joined, and was conducting an active campaign for his restoration. It is interesting to note, in passing, that there is still a pretender to the throne of Brazil. When Dom Pedro died he left his lost crown to Donna Isabella, wife of Count D'Eu, a Bourbon prince. She passed it over to her eldest son, Peter, when he became of age, and only recently he transferred all of his shadowy rights and prerogatives to his younger brother, Louis, who now considers himself the rightful ruler of Brazil. The Old World has a way of keeping up pretenderships that is almost as ridiculous as some of the revolutions of the New World.

It was amusing to watch the development of Mello's rebellion, which continued through all of 1892 and the greater part of the following year. One would have thought that two friendly leaders were planning rival surprise parties, in which there was to be nothing more serious than the throwing of con-

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fetti. Floriano, surrounded by spies and assassins but also by many loyal and devoted friends, knew perfectly well, from his own spies, what Mello was doing, but, relying on his own strength and the public sentiment behind him, he made no move to check him. On the other hand, Mello was well aware that Floriano knew all that was going on, yet neither one gave any outward sign of this knowledge, and when they were together they appeared to be friends.

It was along in July or August, 1893, that I was delightfully dragged into the mysterious muss, after a period of waiting that was long, anxious, and expensive. Mello sent for me first and expressed a wish that I go down to Santa Catharina Island, off the southern coast of Brazil, and blow up the "Republica," the one Brazilian warship whose officers had remained loyal to Floriano, though finally, just before the revolution was declared, they went over to Mello. With the exception of Soldanha da Gama, who was neutral but whom he regarded as more of a friend than an enemy, Mello had converted the rest of the navy to his cause, but the "Republica" held out against him and he wanted her put out of the way of doing him harm. He offered a cash payment and a commission in the navy in return for her destruction, but I could never get him down to definite terms or

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to a contract that I would accept. We had several conferences, and, while we were still negotiating, I received a call from one of Floriano's aides, who asked me to accompany him to the palace. He took me in the rear entrance and up a back stairway to Floriano's private *sala* where, after presenting me, he left me, as I supposed, alone with the President.

"I understand," said Floriano, getting right down to business, "that you were in Venezuela with President Guzman and that you have had military training and experience."

"That is correct, sir."

"I am told, too, that you have made a study of high explosives and have invented a remarkable torpedo."

"That also is true."

"Would you be willing to undertake a mission that would involve considerable danger, but for which you would be well paid?"

"I am open to anything except vulgar assassination. That is my business."

"What do you charge for your services?"

"That depends entirely on the nature of the work."

"Then we can leave that question open until the nature of the work has been decided on, provided it

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is understood that your compensation will be such as you are ordinarily accustomed to."

"Very good, sir."

"Brazil may need your services, Colonel Boynton," with an accent on the "Colonel."

"I beg your pardon," I interrupted, "Captain Boynton."

"I repeat, Colonel Boynton," he replied, with a smile and the suggestion of a bow. "Brazil may need your services, but I cannot tell how soon nor in what capacity."

"If I enter your service it will be a loyal service to the end," I told him.

"Consider yourself then in the service of Brazil." As he said this he raised his hand and from behind a curtain appeared Captain Cochrane, a descendant of the English Admiral Cochrane who had fought for Brazil seventy years before. He had heard all that we had said.

"As we were strangers I took this precaution," explained Floriano. "It will not be necessary again."

"It was a perfectly justifiable precaution," I replied.

Captain Cochrane then repeated in English my conversation with the President, to be sure I understood it, after which I was escorted back to my hotel. Im-

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mediately on my arrival there I sent word to Mello that our negotiations were off and that I would consider no further proposition from him.

A few days after this meeting with the President the revolution was declared, under conditions such as one would look for on the light opera stage but never in real life, not even in South America. On the evening of September fifth, Floriano went to the opera, accompanied by Mello, Soldanha and several other officers of the army and navy, and they all sat together in the presidential box. Mello and Soldanha excused themselves after the second act. They left their cloaks in the box and said they would be back in a few minutes. Knowing full well the reason for their departure and that they had no thought of returning, Floriano bowed them out with an ironical excess of politeness. Soldanha, who had not yet taken sides, though his sympathies were with the "rebellion" and he subsequently allied himself with it, retired to the naval school, on an island near the city, and Mello went on board his flagship, the "Aquidaban." During the night he assembled his captains and impressively gave them their final orders, with the dramatic announcement that the standard of revolt would be hoisted at sunrise. His fleet, in addition to the flagship, consisted of the

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"Guanabara," "Trajano," and "Almirante Tamandate," protected cruisers; the "Sete de Setembro," a wooden barbette ship; the gunboat "Centaur," and two river monitors. The protected cruiser "Republica," whose officers had just decided to join the rest of the navy in the effort to compel the retirement of Floriano, was coming up from down the coast, and the "Riachuelo," with which Mello had forced the abdication of Deodoro, was cruising in the Mediterranean. It was not an imposing fighting force but it was sufficient to give Mello command of the sea, while Floriano was in control of the forts and the land forces.

At daybreak Mello seized all of the government shipping in the bay and announced a blockade of Rio harbor. He then sent word to Floriano that if he did not abdicate, without naming his successor, by four o'clock that afternoon, the city would be bombarded. This threat was also communicated to the foreign ministers, evidently in the hope that they would try to persuade Floriano to step out, in the interests of peace, but they promptly protested to Mello against bombardment. Under any circumstances, they told him, unless he proposed to violate the international rules of warfare, he could not bom-

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bard until after formal notice of forty-eight hours, to allow the removal of neutrals and non-combatants.

Floriano's reply was an emphatic refusal to abdicate, and, precisely at four o'clock, Mello answered it with one shell from a three-inch gun, which exploded near the American consulate and killed a foreigner. During the next week Mello fired forty or fifty shots into the city every day but they did little damage; the fact that they apparently were not aimed at any particular spot probably made no difference in the execution. Frequently he would send boats ashore for supplies, to which nobody paid any attention, and at four o'clock every afternoon the "Aquidaban" would steam solemnly over and engage in a comic opera duel with Fort Santa Cruz, which was located at the point of the harbor entrance opposite Sugar Loaf Hill. Mello's shots invariably went clear over the fort or buried themselves in its walls, while the gunners at the fort could not have hit him if he had stood still for an hour, so no damage was done to either side. After about twenty shots the "Aquidaban" would return to her anchorage, slowly and with great dignity, and hostilities would be over until the next day at the same hour. This daily duel, which was the star act in the serio-comic programme, always drew a crowd to the water front. Business

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went on as usual throughout the "revolution," which was regarded with amused interest rather than with fear.

Very soon after the firing of the first shot, Italian, English, German, Austrian, and Portuguese warships appeared at Rio, ostensibly to protect the rights of their citizens, but their prompt arrival, made possible only by the fact that they were cruising close at hand, which was in itself significant, and the attitude they assumed, made it plain to me that they were there under secret orders to aid in the restoration of Dom Pedro. Mello was not a rebel but a pirate, yet the commanders of these foreign ships, all representing monarchies, gave him their moral support, and I have always believed that only the belated arrival of an American naval force prevented them from giving him their active support as well. Their influence was so strong that when Rear Admiral Oscar F. Stanton, of the United States Navy, finally reached Rio, he made the inexcusable mistake of saluting Mello. For this he was speedily recalled, Rear Admiral Gherardi being sent down to succeed him. Stanton's excuse was that he wished to maintain a neutral position, but no question of neutrality was involved. I know that several of the American naval officers who arrived later shared my

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view that Mello was a pirate and should have been blown out of the water by the combined fleets. It was evident, from the prompt recall of Stanton, that the Navy Department at Washington held the same opinion but had not sufficient courage in its convictions to order the suppression of Mello. The ranking officer of the combined fleets was the Italian Vice Admiral, Magnani. The senior British officer present was Captain Lang, of the "Sirius." Until the arrival of an officer of flag rank Captain Henry F. Picking, of the "Charleston," was the senior officer present of the American Navy, and next to him was Captain (now Rear Admiral, retired) Silas W. Terry, on the "Newark."

About a week after the firing of the first shot I was on my way to the water front to witness the regular afternoon duel between the "Aquidaban" and Fort Santa Cruz, when I was overtaken by a government carriage, and Col. Pimental, whom I knew well, asked me to get in with him as he had orders for me from Floriano. He drove along the shore of the bay to a new galvanized building, at a point some distance beyond the island of the naval school and near the railway machine shops. On the way he explained that this building had been erected for my use and in it I was to construct, as rapidly as possible, a

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large torpedo with which to destroy the "Aquidaban." I was to have whatever I called for, but, from the time work was begun on the torpedo until it was finished, I was to allow no one to enter or leave the building, for fear that word of what was being done should get to Mello's spies. The structure was of ample size and had comfortable living accommodations for ten men, which was as many as I could use. I took up my quarters in the building at once and after drawing on the master mechanic of the railroad for a lot of copper plates and such other supplies as I would need, got right to work.

Late that evening I heard the rumble of a carriage outside and a moment later in walked Floriano, with an old gray shawl around his shoulders, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Marine, and a Senator. Floriano inquired first as to my comfort and I assured him that I was entirely satisfied. Then he said: "I am relying on you, Colonel Boynton, to save Brazil from further trouble by destroying the 'Aquidaban.' You will have to make and use your torpedo, with such help as we can give you. Now that you know what you are to do, what is your price?"

I told him I would expect to be paid the appraised value of the ship if I sank her or put her out of com-

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mission. After consulting with the others Floriano agreed to my terms; but to prevent future argument we fixed the value of the ship at six hundred thousand dollars gold and a contract along these lines was drawn up and signed the next day.

The torpedo which I built for this business was the largest I had ever made. It was twelve feet long and four feet in diameter in the middle, and carried more than five hundred pounds of dynamite, for I wanted to be certain that the ship would be at least disabled by her contact with it. I paid the most careful attention to the mechanism and, to prevent the possibility of a miss-fire, arranged a double detonating apparatus which would explode the main charge when either one of the projecting arms was forced backward by pressing against the hull of the ship. With the completion of the torpedo, which it took us ten days to build, I tested it with five hundred and fifty pounds of iron and found that I had calculated the air chamber support to precisely the proper point, for it floated just below the surface of the water. Floriano came down to witness the final test, after a few leaks, developed by the first one, had been closed, and handed me a commission as Colonel in the Brazilian Army. He approved the plan of cam-

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paign which I had mapped out and said the necessary orders would be issued at once.

"I believe you will succeed," were his parting words. "I hope you will come back as General Boynton."

To the south of Rio Bay, which is the main harbor, and within the city itself, lies the little Bay of Botafogo, round like an apple and with a narrow entrance. On the north side of the harbor and cut off from it by a long, low peninsula which ends in a high promontory, is Nictheroy Bay. This peninsula, which is so low for a considerable distance back of its terminating eminence that it is covered by water at high tide, when it is crossed by a bridge, lies west of the Fort of Santa Cruz. Mello's fleet was anchored off the peninsula, on the opposite side of the harbor from the city. While Mello had seized all of the government vessels in the harbor there were a few tugs left, which, to prevent his interference, were flying the British flag, on the pretence that they were owned by Englishmen. I was to be given one of these tugs and my plan was to steal around into Nictheroy Bay at night and anchor close under the hill at the end of the peninsula, where I would be hidden from the rebel fleet. In the morning I would load the torpedo and wait for the daily exchange of cannon cour-

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ties between the "Aquidaban" and the fort. An officer at Santa Cruz was to signal me when Mello left his anchorage and then, towing the submerged torpedo by a wire rope too small to be detected, I would steam out from behind the sheltering promontory and head for Botafogo Bay. This would carry me directly across the course of the "Aquidaban," which would pick up the towing line on her bow, drag the torpedo alongside of her, and, as I expected and hoped, be destroyed by the explosion which would ensue when one of its long arms came in contact with her hull.

The line by which the torpedo was to be towed was two thousand feet long and was supported at intervals by little floats that were painted the color of the water. This gave me room to keep well clear of the "Aquidaban," and I did not think Mello would see anything suspicious in an insignificant little tow-boat, under the British flag, running diagonally across his bow at a distance of a quarter of a mile. This was the only plan which gave promise of success, for it was impossible for an unknown craft of any kind to get close to the "Aquidaban" while she was at anchor, and there never has been any doubt in my mind that it would have worked perfectly but for the fact that Mello had full knowledge

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of our movements and our plans. Our operations had been conducted with such extreme secrecy that we had no suspicion that they were known to any one but Floriano and his most trusted advisers but, as a matter of fact, Mello's spies in high places had kept him constantly advised as to what we were doing and when we intended to strike. To show his high regard for the foreign fleet of royalty he reported us to the British naval commander and we were captured in humiliating fashion, while the "Aquadaban" remained safely at her anchorage. Mello expected that I would be turned over to him and that he would have the satisfaction of ordering my execution, but in that he was disappointed.

My tug, in charge of a French engineer and four Brazilians, was sent down to me on the afternoon of September 25, and as soon as it was dark, with the torpedo covered with canvas on deck and twelve fifty-pound boxes of dynamite in the pilot house, we steamed around in Nictheroy Bay, hugging the shore all of the way. To have loaded the torpedo before we started on the necessarily hazardous trip would have been extremely dangerous, for any accidental pressure on one of its arms would have blown all of us to pieces. We anchored in the lee of the peninsular promontory, well out of sight of the rebel

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fleet, and as soon as it was daylight I unscrewed the manhole of the torpedo and proceeded to pack it full of dynamite. All of the men were either helping me or intently watching the novel proceeding, for we were not expecting visitors. I was just putting in the last box of the explosive when there was a shrill whistle and a launch from the "Sirius" swung alongside. The lieutenant in charge of our unbidden and most unwelcome guest jumped aboard of us and came aft before I could brush the dynamite from my arms.

"Who commands this craft?" he demanded.

"I do," I replied.

"What are you doing with that flag up there?" pointing to the British ensign.

"That flag was there when I came aboard and took command," which was true. Then, seeing that he thought I was trying to evade the question, I added: "I am flying it for protection from a pirate fleet, just as others are displaying it in Rio Bay and in the city. Your commanding officer has sanctioned that custom by his silence. I am an officer of the established Brazilian Government, obeying the orders of my superiors in Brazilian waters, and I claim the right to take advantage of that custom, if I care to do so, just as others have done and are doing."

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"I think the other cases are different from yours," replied the lieutenant. "What is that?" pointing to the dynamite.

"Examine it for yourself."

"It looks like dynamite."

"Probably."

"Well, sir, I am ordered by Captain Lang to take you on board Her Majesty's ship "Sirius."

It was of no use to make a fight so I accompanied him, with excessive and sarcastic politeness. He took all of my crew with him, leaving a guard on the tug. Captain Lang was on deck waiting for me and was quite agitated when I was brought before him, but he was much more heated before we parted company, and it was a warm day to begin with.

"Captain Boynton, what does this mean?" he roared at me.

"What does what mean?" I innocently inquired.

"Your lying over there in a vessel loaded with munitions of war and flying the British flag?"

"It means simply that I am an officer in the Brazilian Army, on duty under the guns of a rebel fleet, and that I am flying the British flag for whatever virtue it might have in protecting me from that pirate, Admiral Mello. That flag has been used as a protec-

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tion by many others and you have silently acquiesced in such use of it."

"But, sir, are you not aware that this is piracy?"

"I am not aware, sir, that it is any such thing."

"But I tell you that it is piracy to fly the British flag over the ship of another nation and carrying munitions of war."

"It might be just as well, Captain Lang, for you to remember that you are not now on the high seas. An act of the British Parliament is of no effect within another country, and if you will consult your chart you will find that we are in the enclosed waters of Brazil. Under such conditions no mandate of yours which affects my rights can be enforced, unless you have the nerve to take the chances that go with your act."

"You may soon find to the contrary," shouted the captain, who was letting his temper get the best of him. "I have a mind to send you to Admiral Mello as a prisoner. You know what he would do to you."

"Oh, Captain Lang," I said jeeringly, "you know you wouldn't do that."

"And pray why not, sir?"

"Because you dare not do it, and that's why," I told him, as I pointed at the "Charleston" which, with her decks cleared for action, was anchored only

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a few hundred yards off to port. "I dare you to do it. I defy you to do it. Send me aboard the 'Aquidaban' if you dare." I was making a strong bluff and I got away with it. The outraged Britisher swelled up with anger and turned almost purple, but he did not reply to my taunt. Instead, he summoned the master at arms and placed me in his charge, ordered his launch, and dashed off to the "Charleston." He returned in half an hour and, without another word to me, ordered a lieutenant to take me aboard the "Charleston."

I will not deny that I was a bit easier in my mind when I saw my own flag flying over me, yet had I known the treatment I was to receive under it, I would have felt quite differently.

It was easy to see, from the reception which Captain Picking gave me, that he had been influenced by the attitude of Captain Lang, for he took about the same view of my action. I told him that I was an American citizen, temporarily in the employment of the Brazilian Government, as were several other Americans who loved fighting and excitement; that I had violated no law of the United States or of Brazil, and I demanded that I be set ashore. He coldly informed me that I would be confined to the ship, at least until he had consulted with the Ameri-

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can Minister and communicated with Washington. Not only did Picking regard Mello as a rebel rather than a pirate but he went even farther and recognized him as a belligerent, which meant that he was entitled to all the rights of war. This opinion was shaped, undoubtedly, by the royalist commanders in the harbor, whose superior rank seemed to have a hypnotic effect on Picking, and their influence over him was so strong that soon after I arrived on the "Charleston" I was confined to my room, as a dangerous character and a man who threatened the peace of nations. With this decidedly unpleasant recollection, however, it is a pleasure to know that the other American naval officers, who arrived later, took exactly my view of the whole situation and became champions of my cause. They told Picking that Mello was a pirate and should be treated as such, and that I was being deprived of my liberty without the slightest warrant of law, but they were powerless to accomplish my release, as Picking was in command, as the senior officer present, and all of the correspondence with Washington was conducted through him. Captain Terry, though he never had met me and could not be charged with having his opinion biassed by any personal relation, was especially vigorous in urging that I be released and

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that Mello's farcical revolution be suppressed without further ceremony. He denounced my detention as a disgrace to the American Navy and though he and Picking had been bosom friends up to that time, a coolness developed between them, on account of the manner in which I was treated, that continued until Picking's death, years later.

The manner in which that old fighter, Rear Admiral Benham, put an end to the "revolution" in the following January, soon after his arrival at Rio, should be well remembered, for it was a noble deed and an example of the good judgment generally displayed by American naval officers when they are not hampered by foolish orders from Washington. In the vain hope of arousing enthusiasm in his lost cause, Mello had gone down the coast, where he figuratively and literally took to the woods when he saw the folly of his mission, leaving Da Gama in command of the blockading fleet. The captains of several American merchant ships, who had been prevented for weeks from landing their cargoes for Rio, appealed to Admiral Benham who took prompt action. To show his contempt for the rebels, whom he properly regarded as pirates, making no secret of the fact, Admiral Benham assigned the smallest ship in his squadron, the little "Detroit," commanded by that

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great little man, Commander (now Rear Admiral, retired) W. H. Brownson, to escort the merchantmen up to the docks. At the same time he warned Da Gama not to carry out his threat to fire on them when they crossed his line. With his ship cleared for action, as were the "San Francisco," "New York," "Charleston," and "Newark," which stood guard over the rebel fleet, at a considerable distance, Brownson stood in alongside one of the merchantmen. He steamed over close to the "Trajano," on which Da Gama's flag was flying, and which, with the "Guana-bara," was guarding the shore.

"I will recognize no accidental shots," shouted Brownson to the rebel admiral, "so don't fire any. If you open fire I will respond, and if you reply to that I will sink you."

As the merchant ship came in line the "Trajano" fired a shot across her bow. Brownson replied instantly with a six-pound shell which exploded so close to the "Trajano" that it threw water on her forward deck. A musket shot was fired from the "Guanabara," and it was answered and silenced with a bullet from the "Detroit."

After seeing his charge safely tied up to the dock Brownson circled contemptuously around the "Trajano" and ordered a marine to send a rifle shot into

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her sternpost, as an evidence of his esteem for her commander. The discomfited Da Gama, who was looking for some excuse to end his hopeless revolt, fell over himself getting into his launch, raced over to the "Detroit" and tendered his sword to Brownson. Brownson told him he had not demanded his surrender, as he seemed to think, and could not accept it, but that he must keep his hands off American shipping if he wished to continue his mortal existence. The "revolution" ended right there, but unfortunately I was not present to witness its collapse. The august naval authorities were scandalized when this display of good sense was reported to them and they carefully prepared a message of censure to Benham for permitting such conduct, but before it was despatched the New York morning newspapers reached Washington—and after a perusal of their enthusiastic editorials on the subject a message of commendation was sent to him instead.

During my confinement on the "Charleston" I was occasionally allowed on deck for exercise, but I had no other diversion, which really was an aggravation, than to watch the intermittent bombardment of the city and the regularly scheduled exchange of shots between the rebel fleet and the forts. In hope of meeting with greater success Mello would some-

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times engage the forts with several of his ships and, as time wore on, there was some improvement in the marksmanship on both sides, though nothing like reasonable accuracy was ever attained. The only incident which was at all exciting was the sinking of the "Javary," one of Mello's monitors. A shell from Fort Sao Joao dropped between her turrets and as she heeled over from the explosion an accidental shot from Fort Santa Cruz struck her below the water line. She went down by the stern with a rush. The guns in her forward turret were pointed toward the town and they were fired, in a spirit of sheer bravado, just as she disappeared. Mello threw a few shells into the city every day, as evidence that he was still in rebellion, but I was told that less than half a dozen of them did any damage and they certainly produced little excitement. Soldanha da Gama came out in the open and joined forces with Mello while I was on the "Charleston."

I was not allowed to communicate with any one on shore, and, except from hearsay, Floriano had no means of knowing whether I was alive or dead. Captain Picking claimed to have been told by a church dignitary, who, of course, was a friend of Mello, that it would be unsafe to set me ashore as I was certain to be assassinated by Mello sympathizers, but that

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doubtless was a subterfuge by which he sought to justify his position. After I had been subjected to this outrageous treatment for two months—from September 26 to November 26—I was suddenly and without any explanation transferred to the “Detroit,” which immediately put to sea. Off Cape Frio we met another “Sirius,” a Lamport & Holt liner bound for New York, and, in charge of Ensign Jas. F. Carter, I was transferred to her. We reached New York on December 19, 1893, and I was taken to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. An hour after my arrival a message was received from Washington ordering my release. The Navy Department had me on its hands, did not know what to do with me, and finally, in line with the vacillating policy then in vogue, took that cowardly method of getting me away from the danger zone. Adhering to my rule of never talking about myself or my troubles I made no complaint, but I have always considered that my treatment was a disgrace, and most of the naval officers who were in Rio at the same time will bear me out in that statement. It was the sort of treatment one might expect in an absolute monarchy but not in a republic, with all of its false boasts about the freedom of the citizen and protection of his rights.

CHAPTER XV

REVOLUTION AS A FINE ART

NOTWITHSTANDING the discouragement I had met with in Brazil, and the manner in which I had been deprived of a fresh fortune and much excitement by the discovery of my plan to send Admiral Mello and his rebel flagship skyward with a beautiful torpedo of my own invention and construction, the passion for adventure was still strong within me, but I was unable to gratify it with the resources then at my command. My finances, already considerably crimped by my extravagant way of living and several unprofitable years, had been still further depleted by my long and idle stay at Rio Janeiro, while waiting for the Mello insurrection to become an actuality, and I felt it the part of wisdom to assure myself of an income until something opened up that would be more exciting than working for a living.

Therefore, soon after my prompt release from the Brooklyn Navy Yard, just before Christmas in 1893, after my outrageous treatment at the hands of Captain Picking and the Navy Department, I engaged

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with the Maxim Powder & Torpedo Company to travel through Central and South America and the West Indies and sell munitions of war to governments, or to any one who had the necessary cash or could furnish reasonable security. But before setting forth I organized, with several of my friends, the International Export & Trading Company. Through this concern it was proposed to arm and finance any promising revolution I might encounter whose leaders would guarantee, in the event of success, to pay us anywhere from three to ten times the amount of money we had actually invested in the enterprise, and give us valuable concessions besides. No get-rich-quick scheme that was ever devised equals the financing of a revolution, when it succeeds and is honestly managed. The experience tables of the turbid tropics prove that the chances are somewhat against the success of these outbursts of predatory patriotism, but the prospects of failure are amply discounted by the exorbitant terms of the contract; the great trouble is that they generally are in charge of men who have no more respect for a written agreement than for a moral obligation. The man who bets at random on the honesty of revolutionary leaders in Latin America, no matter how sincere their promises nor what odds they offer, stands a much

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better chance of winning from a faro game operated with a two-card box, but as I had a personal acquaintance with or knowledge of most of the disturbing elements in those days, and knew how far they could ordinarily be trusted, I thought I might run across one or two with whom it would be safe to do business. In case any such ambitious ones were found I intended to become an active participant in the proceedings, as a sort of guarantee of good faith and to increase my interest in them.

Determined to tackle the hardest proposition first, I boarded an Atlas liner for Hayti, where old Florville Hippolyte was at the zenith of his power. I knew that while I had been smuggling Chinamen into Australia, General Legitime, whom I had accompanied into exile at Jamaica when President Salomon deported him for plotting against the government, at the same time that he conveyed to me a broad hint to leave the country without a delay of more than a few hours, had returned to the island in 1888, after an absence of more than three years, and had led a temporarily successful revolt through which he had himself elected President of the provisional government, in succession to the man who had exiled him. Gen. Seide Thelemaque promptly organized an opposing government at Cape Haitien, with Gen. Hippolyte

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at the head of it. Thelemaque was soon afterward killed in battle but Hippolyte continued the revolution. Through its navy the United States gave him its "moral support," which is a powerful thing when intelligently directed, and within a year from the time he landed in Hayti to lead his little rebellion, Legitime was compelled to again return ingloriously to his haven in Jamaica. Two months later, in October, 1889, Hippolyte was formally elected President and he continued in power until he died on horseback, at the head of his army, near Port au Prince, in the Spring of 1896.

Because of my affiliation with Legitime, whom I had mistakenly picked out as the coming man in Hayti, Hippolyte and I had quarrelled just before Legitime and I were ordered from the country; but that had been years before, and I deluded myself with the belief that, if he had not forgotten the affair, it had been forgiven, for there is supposed to be some sort of honor even among soldiers of fortune and the men with whom, at different times and under varying conditions, they ally themselves. The lovers of liberty, and lucre, who command insurrections are out chiefly for what there is in it for themselves, while the simple soldiers of fortune, like myself, are in the game mainly for the excitement and amuse-

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ment of conflict. It is against the ethics of the profession of promoting trouble for the members of one faction to cherish grudges against the other, except perhaps under conditions involving personal honor, and that is not often at stake. However, I soon learned that Hippolyte, who was essentially a savage with a lot of uncultured cunning, was no believer in the unwritten revolutionary rules.

The steamer reached Port au Prince in the morning and I went to the Hotel Bellevue, which faced the park, directly opposite the presidential palace. I had just finished breakfast when an American quad-roon named Belford, who boasted the proud title of Admiral of the Haytian Navy and with whom I had become well acquainted during my previous visit, entered the hotel. He recognized me instantly and after an exchange of greetings and some random remarks about the old days, he wanted to know what I was doing there. I handed him my card, showing that I was the representative of the Maxim Powder & Torpedo Co.

"But what is your real business?" he inquired with a smile.

"The card states it correctly."

"How long are you going to stay?"

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"At least long enough to sell old Hippolyte a good bill of goods, I hope."

"You are not going to see the old man himself?" he incredulously inquired.

"Surely. I hope to see him to-day."

"You'd better be careful, Boynton. He remembers you in a way that is likely to make trouble for you."

"He ought to have forgotten all about our little difference by this time, or at least he should not harbor hatred of me."

"The old man has a long memory. He never forgets and I never have known him to forgive."

I laughed at his friendly anxiety but he continued in the same strain. While we were talking we saw a young officer coming up the path to the hotel. "Here comes one of the old man's aides," said Belford. "He's after you already."

I told him it was impossible, for I had been in town only a few hours, but he insisted he was right and quickly left me so we should not be found together. I stepped into a side room where the young officer came up to see me in a few minutes, guided by the hotel proprietor.

"This is Captain Boynton?" he said, with more of declaration than inquiry.

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"At your service, sir."

"President Hippolyte requests you to call on him at three o'clock this afternoon."

"Present my compliments to the President and tell him I will be at the palace at that hour," I replied.

Belford rejoined me when the aide was out of sight. He said he did not like the looks of things and advised me to go back on board the steamer, which was still in the harbor. I told him I thought he was unnecessarily alarmed, but that anyway I had come to Hayti as an American citizen on legitimate business, and I proposed to stay until it had been transacted.

In the middle of the afternoon I donned full evening dress, according to the court requirement, and presented myself at the palace, where I was at once ushered into Hippolyte's private reception room.

"What brings you here, Captain Boynton?" was the sharp salutation of the old black butcher.

"I am selling munitions of war," I replied, and handed him my card.

"Is that all?" he asked, with a look as keen as a razor and in a voice almost as cutting.

"That is all."

With this assurance, which seemed to carry con-

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viction, Hippolyte relaxed considerably and shook hands with me.

"I want to sell you some smokeless powder," I told him. "It is the latest thing and is a great aid to annihilation."

"Don't want it," was his brusque response.

"It is almost noiseless, as well," I urged. "With its use an enemy would find it difficult to locate your troops."

"That is worse yet," he said, with as much of a smile as his ugly face was acquainted with. "We want powder that will make much smoke and lots of noise."

I told him I had that kind too, and other things which he ought to have.

"Well," he said, with a suggestion of impatience, "go to the Minister of War and get your order, and then get out. Where are you going from here?"

"To Santo Domingo."

"Good. I'll help you. The 'Toussaint l'Ouverture' [a little gunboat named for the negro Napoleon of Hayti] will take you there when you are ready. You must be prepared to sail within a week."

"Why all this hurry?" I inquired in great surprise. "It has been years since I was in Port au Prince and I want to revisit old familiar places and

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renew acquaintance with old friends, if there are any left." I might have added that I disputed his right to prescribe the length of my stay, but I did not wish to provoke a row with the old fellow, at that time.

He almost beamed on me as he replied, "I like you, Captain, but I don't want you in Hayti. You can stay just one week."

I told him I earnestly hoped he would extend the time limit and left him, backing out, if you please. I went direct to the Minister of War, who made out a memorandum covering a large consignment of fighting materials and said he would send the official order to my hotel, which he did. Soon after my return to the hotel I was introduced to Freeman Halstead, the correspondent of a great New York newspaper, who had been in Hayti for some time. I had noticed him talking with the proprietor that morning, when Hippolyte's aide came to the hotel in search of me. In the interval he had cabled his paper that I was in Hayti and had received reply, he said, to "stick to Boynton until further orders." I told him I had no news and did not expect to make any, but he declared that he would stand by to see what happened. He said he was on an intimate footing with

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Hippolyte and suggested that he might be able to help me.

During the evening I received a call from an old German acquaintance, named Hefferman, and at his invitation I accompanied him to his home. His wife necessarily was a native negress for, on account of the stringent anti-foreign law, all of his property stood in her name. He confided to me the fact that he was the agent for Gen. Mannigat, another would-be revolutionary leader who was in exile at Jamaica, and that with the aid of a French woman, known as Natalie, of whom Hippolyte was greatly enamoured, he had just formulated a plan to kidnap the President. His scheme was to have Natalie give Hippolyte some drugged wine and, while he was unconscious, put him in a box and bundle him off to a waiting sailing ship which would proceed to Jamaica, where the deposed and dopey President would be turned over to Mannigat, who could make such terms with him as he desired. To the mind of my German friend this would establish a new standard in revolutions and he wanted me to share in his glory, in return for my assistance. I complimented him on his idea of stealing a President, which, under such conditions as he described, might be accomplished, but pointed out that to make his coup successful he

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must have Mannigat on the ground with a force sufficiently large to seize and hold the government when Hippolyte was removed; that unless this was done both of them would be frozen out by some cockaded criminal who was waiting for just such an opportunity. I told him if the conditions which I had stipulated could be complied with I would be glad to finance and equip the revolt, subject to satisfactory guarantees, but that as it stood I could have nothing to do with it.

It was late when we finished our talk and I made the mistake of spending the night with Hefferman who, as it turned out, was vaguely suspected of being disloyal to Hippolyte, or at least out of sympathy with him, though there was no notion that he was Mannigat's confidential agent. As a result of my long visit to the German, the mistaken suspicion was created that I had come to Hayti to plot against the President and was trying to draw Hefferman into my plans. This suspicion soon became apparent. Halstead and Belford told me there was no doubt, from what they had heard at the palace and elsewhere, that Hippolyte thought I had lied to him and believed I was there to make trouble for him. On the sixth day after my arrival Belford told me he was to take me on the "Toussaint" the next day,

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ostensibly to convey me to Santo Domingo, but that he had secret orders, from Hippolyte himself, to see to it that I "fell overboard" well out at sea and was not rescued. He begged me to get out of the country that day, as he would have to obey orders or "walk the plank" himself. Halstead brought me word that I was to be arrested the next day and he was positive that I was to be "shot while attempting to escape" or put out of the way in some such fashion. That made it look as though the old scoundrel meant business and I concluded to give him the slip. Halstead declared he was going with me and as I knew I could rely on him I let him arrange the details of our departure. Pretending that he was going to Jacmel he sent his trunk and mine, both marked as his own, on board a Dutch steamship which had come into port that morning and was to leave the next day.

Against the protests of both Halstead and Belford I paid Hippolyte a parting call that afternoon. I thanked him for his courtesy and the order for arms and told him I would be ready to sail the next morning on the "Toussaint," which I expected would be waiting for me. The old villain was in his happiest mood and even joked with me about latter day conditions in Hayti as compared with those which had

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existed when I was there before. If I had not known what was in his mind I might have thought he was simply glad I was going away without having stirred up any trouble for him, but, knowing his murderous plans, I appreciated that he was gloating over me. The strange situation amused me so that I laughed immoderately at his jokes and, as all of his gloating was to be in anticipation, I let him enjoy himself to his fill.

"Good-bye, my friend," he said as I was leaving. "I wish you a quiet and peaceful trip to-morrow."

He chuckled over his irony and I smiled back at him, with my thanks. That evening, after Halstead had loudly announced in the hotel office that he expected a visitor at eleven o'clock and wished him sent directly to his room, he and I slipped out by a back way, went to a lonely spot on the beach where he had a boat in waiting, and rowed out to the Dutch ship. On account of his newspaper connection Halstead had much influence with the captain and when the ship was searched for me the next morning, on the pretence that I was a political prisoner who was attempting to escape, I was not found.

We went to Jamaica, where Halstead formerly had lived, and there I got in touch with General Mannigat, and went over his plans against Hippolyte. He

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impressed me as a fighter and reasonably honest and he convinced me that he had a considerable following in Hayti. He was positive that if he had enough arms he could capture the country, so I arranged with him that the International Export & Trading Co., my concern for promoting revolutions, would ship him twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of munitions of war on the receipt of three thousand dollars in cash and in the further consideration on his part of a pledge that thirty-three per cent of the customs receipts at Port au Prince would be turned over to us, until we had been paid two hundred and twenty thousand dollars, which was at the rate of ten dollars for every one dollar that we risked. I drew up a contract to this effect, which he signed, and sent the order for the arms to New York, with instructions to fill it when Mannigat sent the three thousand dollars. The money never was sent, but I still hold the contract, as a souvenir.

Mannigat was in doubt as to how soon the requisite amount of cash could be raised, so it was arranged that I should be advised when it was forwarded to New York, in order that I might return and take an active part in his operations, and I went on to the Isthmus of Panama, then a part of Colombia. I stopped at the International Hotel, probably so

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named because it was the worst in the world, at Colon, and made no secret of my business there, or anywhere else; in fact I rather boasted of it, because of the novelty of being engaged in legitimate commerce, even though I was filibustering on the side when the inducements were attractive. Within a few days I was approached by a young Colombian who had been educated in New Jersey and was a good deal of an American in his ideas. Without telling me what they were for, but giving me grounds for drawing my own conclusions, he ordered three thousand Winchester rifles and the same number of revolvers, with a large quantity of ammunition. He said he would give me New York exchange in part payment of the bill the following day, and that the balance would be paid when they were delivered, at a point to be designated later.

During the night that came on the heels of this conversation I heard a few pistol shots but paid no attention to them, as there seemed to be no resultant excitement. In the morning I discovered that two hundred alleged revolutionary plotters, of whom my young customer of the day before was one of the chiefs, had been arrested between darkness and dawn and rounded up in a big yard, surrounded by a high fence, directly back of the hotel. At breakfast I was

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looked at curiously and I soon heard talk that I was also to be taken into custody. A fat and officious English butcher, who was employed by the Governor of Panama to spy on all English-speaking visitors, had reported my meeting with the supposed rebel leader and had advised that I be arrested on the ground that I was fomenting internal disorder. I knew, of course, that I could establish my innocence, but the administration of the law in Latin America is such a fearful and wonderful thing that it might take me weeks or months to do it, and, besides that, I had no desire for a clash with the Colombian Government and the notoriety which would result from it. Therefore, when trouble appeared certain I took refuge with the British consul, who was just then the acting American consul. I explained the situation to him and, while maintaining that my business was perfectly legitimate, denied that I had sold the young patriot any arms, which was technically true as the deal had not been closed, or that I knew he was involved in any proposed revolution. The consul sympathized with me, in compliance with the most important of the unwritten rules of the consular service, but, after satisfying himself that the Governor had been prejudiced against me, he advised that the easiest and quickest way out of the difficulty

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was the best. The steamship "Ferdinand de Lesseps" was leaving the next day for the Spanish Main, which was where I wanted to go, and I went on board of her, under escort of the consul. I was running into more trouble on this trip than I had ever before encountered in ten times the same length of time and it began to look as though I had brought a hoodoo on myself by forsaking the intricate paths of adventure for the broad, not the straight and narrow, way of ordinary trade.

Not wishing to take any further chances with Colombia I did not even go ashore at Savanilla or Cartagena but went on to Venezuela, where Gen. Joachim Crespo was now in command. The rule of President Palacio, whose supporters had betrayed my old friend Guzman Blanco, had lasted but two years and was followed in rapid succession by a series of revolutions. The betrayal of Guzman seemed to have put a curse on the country, for there was disorder all through the Palacio regime and immediately following it there were three dictatorships in one year. Finally, in October, 1892, General Crespo entered Caracas and restored peace so completely that shortly before my arrival he was elected Constitutional President. I recalled that when Crespo was a young staff officer I had recommended

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him to Guzman for his loyalty and intelligence, and, if he knew of this incident, I thought it might now prove of advantage to me in my new occupation.

As we were warping into the dock at La Guaira the chief of police, who was a new man to me, came aboard and looked over the baggage of all of the passengers who were to land there. When we had disembarked he slipped his arm through mine and quietly told me I was under arrest and to go with him. Three officers stepped up behind us to enforce his orders and they all looked me over as though they suspected that I might be full of dynamite. Instead, I was full of questions and protests, but not a word could I get out of them as to the reason for the surprising proceeding. They escorted me to the police station at the end of the long wharf and after I had been carefully searched and relieved of everything but my money I was taken to the fort on the hill and placed in a strong room, if not a comfortable one. The next day I was removed to the Casa Publica, or public prison, at Caracas, where I was not surprised to find several old acquaintances. Gen. Tosta Garcia, whom I had known intimately in the old days, was Governor of the Federal District and had authority over the prison, but, unfortunately,

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he was out of the city and the Intendente, or Vice-Governor, who was a stranger to me, was in charge.

Soon after my arrival I was haled to his office, apparently to be put through an examination, but before he could ask me a question I burst out on him with a bitter denunciation of my arrest. I told him who I was and what I was doing and that if the search of my baggage, which undoubtedly had been made, had failed to establish my identity there were many prominent men in Caracas who would vouch for me, including his own immediate superior. I urged him to explain the reason for my detention; but he would say nothing, beyond a veiled suggestion that it had been ordered by the President.

"Present my compliments to General Crespo," I said, in reply to this amazing intimation, "and remind him, if you please, that I was his friend when my friendship was worth having. Tell him, too, that if this is the way he treats his friends he is a contemptible snake," or words to that effect.

The Intendente was plainly surprised at both my words and my manner and without asking a question he sent me back to the prison. The next morning he directed my release in person. "There is no reason for you to be angry with General Crespo," he said, by way of explanation, "for he has ordered your

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unconditional release. You are free to go where you please and stay as long as you please."

"Which," I replied, "is no compliment to me and in no way lessens the outrage to which I have been subjected."

From the Casa Publica I went to the Grand Hotel and when my traps arrived there I found that they had been, as I supposed, thoroughly ransacked, but nothing was missing. In the following days I encountered many men whom I had known well or intimately fifteen years before, when Caracas was my home for a longer period than any other city in the world had ever been, and I was soon enjoying myself renewing acquaintance with old friends, among whom were members of some of the oldest families in Venezuela. To all of them who asked if I had seen the President, I said I had not and that I did not propose to call on him, as I had been shamefully mistreated by his order. Two or three weeks after my arrival the Minister of War sent for me and said he understood I was the agent of a house that sold munitions of war. I said that was true, and when he expressed surprise that I had not called on him I told him I had been subjected to a great injustice through him and through General Crespo, and that while I did not expect an apology from either

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one I could at least show them how I felt about it by staying away from them, even though I punished myself and my firm by so doing. However, if he was interested, I said I would be glad to show him my samples and quote prices. He said he was interested, and proved it by giving me a large order. Beyond a shrug of the shoulders, which might have meant any one of a dozen things, he made no comment on my complaint of ill treatment. Not long after this I went one evening, by invitation, to the home of a doctor friend of mine and was astonished to be ushered into the presence of President Crespo. It developed that the doctor was one of Crespo's intimate associates, though I had not known it up to that time. The President greeted me with a smile and said, as he extended his hand, "As Mahomet would not come to the mountain, the mountain had to come to Mahomet."

"I never expected that I would have to apologize to the man who, I thought, owed me an apology, even though I did not look for it, but that is the situation I find myself in now," I said to him. "Courtesy compels me to apologize for not having called on you to pay my respects. But," I added, "I am a good deal of a red Indian, which means that I am slow to for-

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give an injury, and I felt that you had done me a great injustice."

"That was a most unfortunate incident," he said, with evident sincerity. "I am going to explain the reason for my action and let you be the judge as to the justification for it." He then told me that five or six weeks previously a circular had been sent out by an American agent of a Central American country, in which it was stated that a man named Boynton, of whom a description was given, was leaving New York ostensibly to sell munitions of war, but that his real purpose was to assassinate President Hippolyte, of Hayti, and President Crespo, of Venezuela. He said, of course, he had not connected me with the alleged anarchist, for that was what the man was stated to be, or he would never have issued the order for my arrest.

"What would you have done if you had been in my place?" asked Crespo when he had completed his explanation.

"Precisely what you did."

"Then, with that explanation, I apologize for the trouble I caused you."

"That removes the last sting," I told him, and we settled down for a long talk. He recalled the fact that I had commended him to General Guzman and ex-

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pressed what seemed to be genuine sorrow over the downfall of that great chieftain. Crespo was very different in appearance from the slender young aide I had known in the old days and was now a big, tall, and well-developed man. He had been President before, from 1884 to 1886, as a dummy for Guzman, so he knew something of both the responsibilities and the dangers of the office. His manner impressed me and I took a pronounced liking to him. He said he had directed the Minister of War to buy a bill of goods from me and to purchase all future war supplies through me, and I told him I had already received the first order.

"I want you to be as good a friend to me as you were to General Guzman," he said in parting. I told him I expected to be in Venezuela for some time and would gladly be of service to him in any way that I could.

A few nights later I was summoned to an adjoining house where I again met Crespo and had a long talk with him alone. He asked me how much I expected to make in my new business. Without going into any of the details of my plans and giving myself the benefit of every doubt, I told him I ought to make fifty thousand dollars a year. He said he did not know whether he could pay me that much in

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salary but in one way and another he would see that I lost nothing if I would consent to stay with him. Through a visit to the United States shortly before he took the field for the presidency he had learned of the work of our Pinkertons, and had become impressed with the need of a secret detective force of his own. It was the same idea that Guzman had when I became his confidential agent, but Crespo wanted it worked out on a broader scale so that he could be kept advised as to the movements and plans of his most important enemies, and truthfully told of the fluctuations in public sentiment. He asked me to undertake the organization of a force of secret service agents, whom I was to employ and pay in my own discretion and for such time as I needed them, and I consented. A means of communication was established through an unused rear door to his private apartments at Santa Inez Palace, to which I was given a key, and I was to have access to him at any hour of the day or night. I told him, however, that our intimate relationship had best not be known, so that I could keep on friendly terms with all classes, and that I would openly criticise him, and even denounce him, whenever it served my purpose and his welfare.

In the two years that followed the relations

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between Crespo and myself became as cordial as they were confidential. Though of humble origin, and fully half Indian, there must have been blue blood somewhere among his ancestors, for he was a polished gentleman in his manners and extremely magnetic. He was tremendously powerful and while he weighed all of two hundred and fifty pounds he was so well built and so tall that he did not look heavy. He put me in mind of a square-rigged ship of graceful lines, with all of her canvas set. He could hardly read and write but he had an insatiable thirst for information, and his close friends used to read to him at night until he fell asleep. He never drank to excess; was a good husband and an indulgent father, and the most continent Venezuelano I ever knew. He thought he was honest and he certainly was loyal to his friends and stubborn in his opinions. He was so strong in his friendship, in fact, that he was sometimes imposed on, for with a man whom he liked and trusted he was as credulous as a child. The advice and warnings of Donna Crespo and myself caused him to turn a deaf ear to many of his evil-minded followers but we could not silence all of them, and their influence prevented him from being a really great President. In the face of a danger that could be seen, no matter how great, he was entirely without fear, but he was in con-

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stant dread of assassination. He was skilful in the use of revolver and rifle and was passionately fond of firearms, perhaps because of his besetting fear. When the first shipment of Maxim guns was received he had me set one of them up in the yard back of Santa Inez Palace. He examined it carefully, with all the pleasure of a child with a new toy, tested its flexibility and radius of action, and then cut "J. Crespo" with a stream of bullets in a brick wall sixty feet away, and gleefully surveyed his handiwork.

Not long after entering his employ I was instrumental in saving his life. He had gone for an outing to an *alto*, or ranch, twenty miles from Guacara, which was near Valencia, where Gen. Ignacio Andrade was then stationed. The night after he left Caracas I learned through one of my agents that two hundred men were to start out at midnight ostensibly for Saint Lucia, but when part way there they were to proceed diagonally across the plains to the ranch at which Crespo was stopping, where they planned to capture and shoot him. I employed a dare-devil nephew of Guzman, whom I knew I could trust, to gallop at top speed to Andrade with a letter in which I told him of the plot. He immediately sent a messenger to the President to warn him of his danger, and followed him quickly with five hundred troops.

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Crespo was found two or three miles out on the ranch, and by his order the soldiers were hidden in and around the farm buildings. When the rebels came up they were surrounded before they knew what had happened. Their leader was shot on the spot and his lieutenants were imprisoned. Andrade did just what any other good soldier would have done, yet it was this act more than anything else, I have always believed, that caused Crespo to select him as his successor, with tragic results. Though deeply grateful to me he considered that he owed his life to Andrade.

Several other plots against Crespo's life were discovered and frustrated by the effective secret service I had created, and most of those who were implicated in them were properly punished. One of these murder schemes, which proved to be more serious than I at first supposed, involved the telephone in Crespo's private room. The plan was to substitute for the regular receiver one which looked exactly like it but was not insulated, and then, when the President had answered a call and was holding the receiver against his ear, switch into the telephone the full current from an electric light dynamo, in the hope that the shock would be strong enough to kill him. My first inkling of this came from an American

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electrical engineer and while I satisfied myself that such a plot had been laid I never was able to get to the bottom of it, though I had an intelligent suspicion as to who was responsible for it.

Crespo was keenly appreciative of my services and was anxious to put me in the way of making a fortune, to take the place of the ones I had lost in speculation and in trying to outdo the King of the Belgians in riotous living, to which I have ever been prone. There were then two lines of horse cars in Caracas. It seemed to me there was a good opening for an electric system, and through Crespo's influence I secured a blanket franchise that was most sweeping in its terms. It gave me the right to parallel the existing lines and build new ones on any streets that I selected, all over the city, or, as it was unfortunately worded "all around the city." The only literal Spanish equivalent for this, as far as I knew, was *circumvalorate*, and that word was used to describe my rights. I was also given the right to condemn waterfalls for thirty miles around to generate electricity. The most desirable of these natural power plants was over toward Macuto, and was owned by one of the Guzman family. I arranged to sell my franchise to a Brooklyn street railway man for three hundred thousand dollars, but when he came to investigate it

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he found that *circumvalorate* meant exactly what it said, "all around the city," and that outside of the lines parallel to the existing street railways, which were specifically provided for, he could do nothing more than build a belt line along the outside edge of the city. Crespo tried to have the franchise amended so that it would give me, in plain terms, just what I wanted and what I thought I had, but the amendment failed of passage by one vote, that of the Guzman descendant, who feared that my next move would be the condemnation of his waterfall. Naturally, the deal fell through. That one miserable word cost me just three hundred thousand dollars. I never have used it since then until now; it is too expensive for ordinary conversation.

In the latter part of 1895 Crespo was asked to revive the concession which Guzman Blanco had granted to the old Manoa Company, and which had subsequently been annulled. This concession, which had passed through several hands and was then held by the Orinoco Company, Limited, took in the entire delta of the Orinoco and covered eight million acres of land, an empire that was wonderfully rich in a variety of resources. Crespo, believing that here was an unusual opportunity for me to rebuild my fortunes and for him to prove his gratitude, notified the

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Orinoco Co. that he would restore the concession provided I was made manager of it. They were quite willing to employ me in this capacity for, without any regard to what ability I might have as a manager, they were assured of having the government with them, which is a consideration of first importance throughout South and Central America. I was by no means anxious to go with them but I finally yielded to Crespo's advice and accepted the appointment, though without binding myself to stay more than six months. Crespo gave me, in effect, the power of life and death over every one on the concession, and put me above the law. He instructed the Governor of the Delta Territorio that whatever I did was well done, and that I was not to be held to account for it. I left for Santa Catalina, the headquarters of the concession, on December 17, 1895, the day that President Cleveland sent to Congress his message on the Venezuelan boundary question.

CHAPTER XVI

AT WAR WITH CASTRO

IT was in vexed Venezuela that I was destined to end my days of deviltry, but not until after a protracted warfare, none the less bitter because it was conducted at long range, with Castro the Contemptible, who came into power two years after I had finally settled down at Santa Catalina as manager for the Orinoco Company. Cipriano Castro had been in Congress as Diputado, or Member of the House, from one of the Andean districts while I was in Caracas with President Crespo, and though he was regarded as a good fighter and a disturbing element he was never considered as a presidential possibility. Had that unhappy prospect ever been suggested it could easily have been imagined that he would, as he abundantly did, prove himself the "Vulture of Venezuela," the most despotic and dishonest ruler with which that unfortunate country has ever been cursed, and the most cunning.

With all of my hatred for Castro and everything pertaining to him it must be admitted that he was an exceedingly shrewd scoundrel; had he been half

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as honest he could have made himself the greatest man in South America. He supported Anduesa Palacio, the deposed President who had betrayed Guzman Blanco, in his final campaign against Crespo, before the latter was recognized as Dictator, and defeated General Morales in the battle of Tariba on May 15, 1892. For some time after that he was in full control of that section of the country, but with the firm establishment of the new regime he gave up the fight. In recognition of the military ability he had displayed, Crespo offered to make him Collector of Customs at Puerto Cabello. He declined the position but, egotistically exaggerating the purpose of the proffer, he pompously promised Crespo that he would not attempt to overthrow his government. He then came to Congress, where he would have been almost unnoticed but for the amusement he created by solemnly removing his shoes and putting on black kid gloves every time he sat down to the, to him, herculean task of drafting a bill. He was as rough and uncouth as the rest of the mountaineers; short of stature, secretive of mind, and suspicious of every one, excepting only a few of his brother brigands from the Andes. At the expiration of his term he returned to the hills and bought a farm just across the Colombian border. He posed as a cattle-raiser,

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but all of the reports that reached Caracas said he was much more of a cattle-rustler, or stealer. He was a persistent tax-dodger and his herd, which was said to show fifty different brands that represented as many thefts, was driven back and forth across the border to avoid the Venezuelan and Colombian collectors. He was engaged in this profitable pastime when I left Caracas, and had disappeared from all political and revolutionary calculations.

I first arrived at Santa Catalina, whither I had gone on the urgent advice of Crespo, early in 1896. It was a straggling little town, with the company's headquarters, a large wooden building containing forty rooms, which was used for both residential and administrative purposes, standing close to the bank of the Piacoa River, a branch of the Orinoco, opposite the lower end of the Island of Tortola—the Iwana of Sir Walter Raleigh. The building contained a store, with a large supply of goods adapted to the needs of colonists in a new and tropical country, and around it were carpenter, blacksmith, and machine shops. The company also owned three small steamers, which were used to bring supplies from Trinidad and run back and forth to Barrancas, thirty miles upstream at the head of the Macareo River, the main estuary of the Orinoco, through which all of the

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commerce passes. The Atlantic Ocean was one hundred and fifty miles below us and Ciudad Bolivar, the principal city on the Orinoco and the head of all-the-year navigation, was one hundred and eighty miles above.

Tradition says that Santa Catalina was named by Raleigh who, according to the native story, camped there when he was pushing his way up the Orinoco in search of the fabled El Dorado, with its golden city of Manoa. Just above Barrancas are the ruins of a strong fort that he built as a safe abiding place for a part of his force while he went farther on up the river. It is, perhaps, the irony of an unkind fate which pursued the great adventurer, that near this fort, from which searching parties were sent out, is the rich mine of El Callao, whose gold probably gave rise to the stories that started Raleigh on his heroic hunt for the shining city that was the objective point of all of the Argonauts who followed Columbus and Ojeda. If Raleigh had been looking for gold by the pound instead of by the ton and had searched more carefully he probably would have found enough to satisfy him.

Stretching away to unmeasured lengths from the pin prick which the headquarters village made in it, was the virgin forest, with its wealth of gold and iron,

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rubber and asphalt, and its square miles of mahogany, Spanish cedar, rosewood, carapo, greenheart, and mora wood, all within the confines of our concession. Far off to the southwest, in a region which I never could find time to explore, was the mythical dwelling place of the people whom Raleigh described, though only on the word of the natives, as having no heads but with eyes in their shoulders and mouths in their chests, with a long mane trailing out from their spines. Down the Orinoco, half way to the coast, was Imitaca Mountain, a great hill of iron ore, which is said to be one of the largest and richest deposits in the world.

The letters which Crespo had given me to the Territorial Governor and to the "Jefe Civile," who had immediate jurisdiction over the headquarters of our concession, gave me a high standing and I proceeded to conciliate the people, who had become disaffected toward the old management, and lay plans for the development of the property. The real boss of the people of Venezuela is the "Jefe Civile." He has complete jurisdiction over the people of his district, which generally embraces a county, and is consulted on all matters of argument, whether domestic, political, or religious. His decision is usually final, although an appeal may be taken to the Court of First

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Instance in which his district is situated. His authority closely resembles that of a French *prefect*, and admits of an intimate knowledge of the private life of the people. Practically, there are no secrets in Venezuela. If two people stop in the street and talk for a moment they are surrounded by an inquisitive crowd. If a woman complains to the Jefe Civile of her husband's ill treatment, it is done with the windows and doors open, in a room more or less filled with idle spectators.

The Jefe Civile at Catalina assisted me in my effort to open up the country and active operations were soon under way. The natives, who were living just as when Columbus discovered them, and wearing no more clothes than could be noticed, were attracted by the prosperity which it was presumed would follow our development work, and little *pueblos* sprang up along the river on both sides of us. These people, working directly for the company or under a license on a royalty basis, were employed chiefly in cutting timber and collecting *balata* gum, which has many of the qualities of rubber without its elasticity and is caught by tapping the trees. The native labor was not very satisfactory at the best, as judged by American standards, and we imported some negroes from Trinidad, who were little better.

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Our concession covered a territory larger than the State of Massachusetts, nearly all of which was *terra incognita*. It was out of the question to think of trying to go all over it, but, to gain an intelligent idea as to the nature of the inland country and its resources, I made one trip into the interior, toward the disputed border of British Guiana, which was our eastern limit. But for the boundary dispute between Venezuela and England the Orinoco Company never would have secured its concession, for the shrewd Guzman granted it with the idea that the Americans would colonize the territory and effectively resist the British invasion, which he was powerless to do. In their progressive search for gold—the continued pursuit of Raleigh's will-o'-the-wisp—the Englishmen in Guiana were advancing farther and farther into Venezuela and carrying the boundary with them, or claiming that it was always just ahead of them, which, so far as Venezuela's protests went, amounted to the same thing. It was, in fact, the sweet siren song of gold that caused the establishment of the three Guianas, so that the British, French, and Dutch might prosecute the search under the most favorable conditions.

My expedition Guianaward was the hardest trip I have ever undertaken and yet one of the most inter-

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esting. We had to make our own trail and though I had a dozen men with me it was a tremendous task to cut our way through the thick underbrush, never before disturbed, which often barred our progress. We could carry few supplies, but it was easy to live off the country, for there was enough game to feed an army. Not knowing what to make of us, the jaguar, puma, tapir, and ocelot came so close that they were easily shot, while overhead were millions of monkeys, parrots, and macaws, to say nothing of great snakes that would have made the fortune of a menagerie manager. At long intervals, living on the banks of rivers, we encountered a few wild Indians, who were terrified until they found we were not tax collectors sent out by the government to take them into slavery on account of their inability to pay extortionate taxes, which are levied for no other purpose than to compel them to work for years without pay. When they became convinced that we meant them no harm they were very friendly and generously offered us things to eat, which I was afraid to touch. They never had seen a white man before, and I regretted that some of my friends were not hidden in the bushes to witness the reverence they showed me. They were armed with bows and arrows, which they used with wonderful accuracy, and crudely fashioned

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spears, and wore nothing much but feathers in their hair. They lived on fish and game, with yams and plantains, and sometimes corn, as side dishes, and native fruits for dessert, and they were the healthiest looking people I have ever seen. I pushed into this veritable paradise for all of a hundred miles, which carried me close to the border, and discovered one outcropping of gold which will some day be developed into a rich property. Our progress was so slow that it was two months before we were back in Catalina.

After getting the development work well started I left it in charge of the superintendent and returned to Caracas. I was not yet ready to bury myself on the concession, for that, I thought, was what it would mean to become a fixture there, and, besides, I was curious to know how things were going at the capital. I stopped at Trinidad on the way to attend to some business for the company and enjoy a taste of real civilization, so it was early in 1897 before I resumed my old confidential position with President Crespo. The restoration was to be only temporary, he declared, for he insisted that a fortune awaited me in the Orinoco delta and wished me to become established there. His term expired the following February and I found that he had already decided on

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General Ignacio Andrade as his successor. He had planned to continue as Dictator of the country, *à la* Guzman, and spend much of his idle time, and money, abroad, and he wanted a man who could be relied on to keep his organization intact and turn the office back to him at the end of his term, for the Venezuelan constitution prohibits a President from succeeding himself.

Donna Crespo, who besides being the greatest smuggler in the country was a shrewd judge of men, had taken a pronounced dislike to Andrade and advised strongly against his selection. Without knowing how truly she spoke she predicted that if Andrade were made President, Crespo would be dead within six months. I added my advice to the Donna's, for I knew Andrade was a weak man and one who could not be trusted to hold the country with the tight rein which his agreement required. Powerful friends of Crespo in Trinidad also urged him to select a stronger man, but he could not be moved. He credited Andrade with having saved his life, on the occasion when I sent a galloping warning of the plot to murder him, and, as a monument to him and an evidence of his friendship, he planned that he should be made President by the first "popular election" in the history of Venezuela. The peons idolized Crespo because they

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felt that he was more nearly one of their own class, as compared with aristocrats of the Guzman Blanco type. He was so well liked by the common people and had such a strong grip on the country that he was able to carry out the idea which his loyal friendship inspired, but with disastrous results in the end, to himself, to Andrade, and to Venezuela.

On election day the soldiers at Guatira, Guarenas, and Petare, surrounding towns which I visited from Caracas to get a close view of the unique proceeding, doffed their uniforms and donned blouses, with their revolvers strapped on underneath, marched to the polls and voted as often as was required. Other towns throughout the country witnessed the same performance. The peons also voted for Andrade, either because they knew Crespo wanted them to or because the soldiers so instructed them, and they kept at it until the designated number of votes had been deposited. For a popular election it was the weirdest thing that could be imagined, yet it was so proclaimed. As though to disprove this boast it was immediately followed by mutterings of discontent from the better class of citizens, and on the night of Andrade's inauguration General Hernandez, the famed "El Mocho," who was Minister of Public Improvements in Crespo's Cabinet but an opponent

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of the new President, took to the hills at the head of three thousand troops and raised the standard of revolt. Crespo really was responsible for the curse of Castro, for had he selected a strong man as his successor the mountain brigand never could have commanded a force sufficiently powerful to overthrow him.

Within a month Andrade went through the form of appointing Crespo Commander-in-Chief of the Army, in order that he might clinch his dictatorship. For a while Crespo contented himself with enjoying his new title and directing operations from the capital, but the Hernandez revolution finally assumed such proportions that he took the field in person to stamp it out. The two armies met in the mountains near Victoria on June 12, 1898. Hernandez was led into a trap, given a drubbing, and captured. After the battle Crespo walked across the field and was leaning over a wounded man when he was shot from behind and instantly killed. It was claimed that the shot was fired from the bush by one of the escaped rebels, and it was so reported, but no one who was at all on the inside accepted this explanation. The bullet that killed Crespo was of a peculiar pattern and exactly fitted the pistol of one of his own officers, who was not a Venezuelano. I doubt if there was

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another weapon exactly like it in the whole country. The responsibility for the murder, for such it undoubtedly was, could easily have been fixed, but the cowardly Andrade refused to order a real investigation and, of course, there was no prosecution. Crespo's body was packed in a barrel of rum and brought to Caracas for burial.

The capture of "El Mocho" checked the spirit of revolt, but not for long. Andrade had nothing to commend him but his honesty, which quality was so little understood in Venezuela that it counted for nothing, and he became more and more unpopular. He was surrounded by plotters, even within his official family, and only their inability to agree on his successor prevented his speedy overthrow. Some few months after Crespo's death, Castro, who had made himself Governor of the State of Los Andes, visited Caracas and called on Andrade with the demand that he be appointed to an important position in the new administration as the price of peace. Andrade, to his credit be it said, not only refused to appoint him to any office but flouted him, and Castro left the Yellow House in a rage. He sought the councils of Andrade's enemies and, after many conferences, it was arranged that there should be a general insurrection early in the following Summer. The

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question of filling the presidency was left open, with the understanding that it should go to the leader who developed the greatest strength during the campaign.

Castro went back to his mountain home, to discover that his cattle had been seized and a warrant issued for his arrest, at the instance of Andrade's friends, for cattle stealing. He resorted to his old trick of dodging across the border, but a similar warrant was secured from the Colombian Government, which had no more love for the Indian upstart than had the one at Caracas. In fact, Castro at one time seriously had considered starting a revolt in Colombia in the hope of gaining the presidency. With officers of both countries searching for him he went into hiding and remained under cover until May 23, 1899, when he invaded Venezuela with a force of sixty *peinilleros*, so called from the fact that they were armed with the *peinilla*, a sword shaped like a scimitar. They were of the lowest type of Indian, but brave and hard fighters. His old cattle-rustling neighbors hailed him with joy, for until then they never had dreamed that any man from the mountains could become a really important factor in Venezuelan affairs, and more than a thousand of them flocked to his standard.

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Supposing that the other parties to the revolutionary agreement would carry out their part of the programme, and that he would join forces with them as he neared the capital, Castro set out on his march toward Caracas. Andrade had become so unpopular by this time that he encountered little opposition, and as he captured successive towns he opened the prisons and the freed convicts fell in behind him. When he reached Valencia, less than one hundred miles from Caracas, he had an undisciplined but effective force of three thousand bloodthirsty brigands. General Ferrer was stationed there with six thousand well-equipped regulars, and though he was by no means enthusiastic in his loyalty to Andrade he did his duty as a soldier, according to the quaint standards of the country. He marched his men out and surrounded Castro, with the exception of a conspicuous hole through which the latter could escape, and then went into camp for the night. This proceeding was in strict accord with the ethics of that strange land. Except in extreme cases it is the unwritten law that when a rebel leader is encountered by a superior government force, the regulars must surround him with a great show, but be careful to leave a wide hole in their line through which he can run away during the night. Invariably he takes advantage of his opportunity and

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it is officially announced that he "escaped." Of course, after a rebel chieftain has made several escapes of this kind and still continues in revolt he is surrounded in earnest, but harsh measures are not resorted to until he has had ample opportunity to escape or come into camp and be good.

Castro violated all the precedents of his plundering profession by failing to run through the hole that had been left for him. When Ferrer saw him the next morning, in the middle of the ring calmly waiting for the fight to begin, he was nonplussed. He could not understand that method of warfare and, concluding that Castro must be a real hero and perhaps, as he even then claimed to be, a genuine "man of destiny," he solved the problem by joining forces with him, for which he was subsequently rewarded by being made Minister of War. Castro learned from Ferrer that he was alone in the revolution, his promised partners having failed to take the field on account of bickerings and jealousies among themselves. This discovery and the addition of Ferrer's forces gave him his first really serious notion that he might become President, and he marched forward in a frenzy of bombastic joy. He picked out a star as his own and ceremoniously worshipped it. Clearly his star was in the ascendant, figuratively at least, for at Victoria,

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only thirty-five miles outside of the capital, he made terms with General Mendoza, who was disgruntled with Andrade, and picked up another army. When the tottering President heard of this final evidence of disloyalty he boarded a gunboat at La Guaira, taking with him a well-filled treasure chest, and went to Trinidad. The alleged warship leaked badly and Andrade, who had a sense of humor, sent word back to Castro by her commander to have her repaired at once so that she might be in better shape for a hurried departure when it should come his turn to be deposed.

By this time the people of Venezuela, ripe for a change of administration and believing that no one could be worse than Andrade, had begun to find out, as had Castro himself, what a powerful person he really was, and they accepted him as their master. He entered Caracas without opposition on October 21, 1900, and, rejecting the modest title of Provisional President, which his predecessors had used, proclaimed himself "Jefe Supremo" or "Supreme Military Leader." He filled all important posts with men from the mountains, on whose loyalty he could rely, and as they were able to secure plenty of graft, not one penny of which was overlooked, he very soon had a tight hold on the country. One of his first acts

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was to release Gen. Hernandez. He soon found that the old warrior was too patriotic and too dangerous to be at large, so he slapped him back into San Carlos, on the pretence that he was planning an insurrection, and kept him there for years. On March 30, 1901, Castro was elected by Congress to fill out the unexpired part of Andrade's term and in the following February he was elected Constitutional President. Then began in earnest his reign of robbery, through the establishment of monopolies whose profits went to his private purse, and his vicious anti-foreign policy which, through the murders and injustices that were committed in its name, made the Boxer uprising in China look like a soft-spoken protest.

I was not in Caracas to witness the advent of Castro, as I had returned to Catalina more than two years before, immediately after Crespo's funeral. During my stay at the capital I had come into possession of a block of stock in the Orinoco Company which made it better worth my while to stay with it, and I had become infected with the idea that if we were let alone the concession could be developed into a very valuable property. It was soon apparent, however, that we were not to remain undisturbed. So long as Crespo was alive I was all-powerful at Catalina, but with his death my influence began to wane

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and the rights of the company to be trespassed upon. The natives could not see how our concession, an integral part of Venezuela, could ever be anything but their own property; they could not, or would not, understand that the government had given away territory from which they could be debarred. It was only the influence of the Jefe Civile that had kept them in bounds before and with the death of my friend Crespo, that official suddenly became at least lukewarm in his loyalty to the law and to me. It naturally followed that the natives overran the concession and did more and more as they pleased. They refused to pay royalty on the *balata* gum, which they carried off in enormous quantities, and stole everything except the headquarters building and the iron ore, which was too heavy and not worth while. The Jefe Civile himself violated the terms of our concession and extortions of all sorts were winked at or openly approved. As Andrade's unpopularity increased my troubles grew, for the natives took sides and began to spy on each other, with the result that false and malicious reports were sent to Caracas as to the company's attitude.

When the threatened revolution became a fact and Castro took the field, Andrade assumed a much more friendly air, but it was too late to be of any value.

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He sent General Marina up the Orinoco to try to arouse enthusiasm for his cause in the east, which section furnishes the only soldiers that can cope with the hardy mountaineers of the west. Marina came to Catalina and asked me to do my best to hold my district in line for Andrade, and gave me his word that if I did so the President would grant me anything I asked for as soon as the revolt was suppressed. At just about the moment this request was made Andrade was fleeing from La Guaira and Castro was assuming full control at Caracas.

Almost the first thing he did was to annul our concession, on the ground that its terms had not been complied with, along with a dozen others, as the beginning of his war on all foreigners. I denied his right to cancel our grant, especially as it contained a clause which stipulated that any disagreement between the government and the *concessionaire* should be referred to the Alta Carte Federale, or Supreme Court, for adjustment. As the case had not been brought before that court I held there could be no legal annulment, even if that power did rest in the executive, which I denied. This contention was subsequently upheld by the International Court of Arbitration, following the blockade and bombardment of

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the allied powers, which decided that our concession was still in full force.

When Castro saw that we did not propose to submit to his arbitrary annulment he undertook to drive me out of the country. He realized that so long as I remained on the concession we could claim to be in full possession of it, and he proceeded to harass me in every conceivable way in the hope of making it too hot for me. Under our contract we were to nominate and pay all of the officers within our territory and the government was to appoint them. My old chief of police, Abreu, was arrested and taken away on some false charge, and a new man, Tinoco, in whose selection I had no voice, was sent to take his place. He was, I learned, a spy and had orders to send in reports which would make it appear that the company was stirring up revolts and otherwise violating the terms of its concession. This I discovered in time to induce Tinoco, with the aid of a pistol, to sign a statement in which he denied all of his dishonest reports and gave the company a clean bill of health. He died soon afterward.

Castro created a military district known as the Territorio Delta-Amacuro, which took in all of our property, and made Catalina the capital, so that the Governor and the other officials could keep me under

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their eyes. They all had instructions to make the place so uncomfortable for me that I would leave. Fortunately, when it received its concession the company had bought the land on which its buildings were erected. Only the fact that I was an American citizen and held the deeds to the property restrained them from expelling me by main force. However, I could see trouble coming, so I dug rifle pits under the porches on the two sides of the house from which we could be attacked. I had plenty of arms and ammunition and about twenty men of whose bravery and loyalty I was sure.

I was prohibited from buying anything at the *pulperia*, or commissary, and we were hard put to it at times for enough to eat. We caught fish in the river and my men stole out into the woods to hunt at every favorable opportunity, but the moment they left our property they exposed themselves to arrest on some trumped-up charge. Sometimes we were able to surreptitiously buy supplies from the natives, and we managed to get along. I filed protests at Caracas, with the Governor and with my company, but they accomplished nothing. I was told by the officials of the company that they were doing the best they could, with representations to the State Department at Washington, and that I would have to do

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the best I could, and I did it. The troops were continually spying on us and annoying us with fictitious charges, but it was a year or more before the government, angered by its failure to get rid of me, resorted to extreme measures. A new Governor was sent down with strict orders to remove me, by force if necessary. He advanced toward the house with about seventy-five soldiers. I ordered my men into the rifle pits and met the General at the gate.

"What do you want?" I demanded fiercely.

"I beg your pardon," replied the commander, with all the treacherous suavity of his race, "but I have orders to take you under my care and escort you to Trinidad in order that no injury may come to you. Our country is troubled and the government is anxious as to your safety."

"My compliments to President Castro," I told him, "and assure him that I feel perfectly secure here, and quite comfortable. You can also tell him that I propose to stay here."

"That is much to be regretted," responded the still overly polite general, "for in that case I have to inform you that my orders are to arrest you and take you to Trinidad."

"In that case," I said, imitatively, "I have to in-

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form you that you will find it impossible to carry out your orders, and I advise you not to attempt it."

"You mean that you will resist arrest?" he exclaimed in surprise.

"Most assuredly," I replied. "This is my property. You have no right to invade it, for I have violated no law of Venezuela. If you enter on it I will fire on you."

"But," he almost shouted, as he waved his arms excitedly toward his enervated patriots, "my men are here to enforce my orders. You would be insane to resist. You do not know the Venezuelan Army, sir."

"You are mistaken," I told him. "I do know the Venezuelan Army. It is you who is ignorant. You do not know my army. It is because I know both that I have no fear. You have not a shadow of right for seeking to arrest me and your blood will be on your own head if you advance."

With this declaration which, in keeping with the comic opera custom of the country, was delivered with all of the dramatic effect I could throw into it, in order that it might carry greater weight, I retired to the house.

The General could see my rifle pits, but he did not know how many men they held nor how well those men could shoot. After a short consultation with his

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staff he gave the order to advance, while he bravely directed operations from the rear. As his men crossed the line we fired, and eight of them fell. They continued to advance and we fired again, dropping nine more of them, while several others were hit. That was too much for them and they broke and ran, leaving seven dead and ten badly wounded. They did not fire a shot, perhaps because our men were so well concealed that Venezuelan marksmanship would have accomplished nothing against them. The General and his staff returned in an hour and asked permission to remove the fallen warriors. After burying their dead they returned to their steamer and went on up the river. In three or four days they came back, with their force slightly increased, and the General again called on me to surrender, under penalty of being arrested as a disturbing factor. I gave him the same reply as before and after thinking it over for a while he marched his troops away again.

That little encounter produced pronounced respect for the Americans among Castro's soldiers and they did not give us much trouble afterward, though they continued to annoy us for a time. With the establishment of the blockade of Venezuelan ports by the allies—England, Germany, and Italy—in the latter part of 1902, and the signing of the peace protocols

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at Washington early in the following year, there came a cessation of hostilities against us. So far as driving us off the concession was concerned, Castro seemed to have given up the fight, but on account of the disturbed condition of the country and the fact that the government was known to be inimical to us, it was impossible to do anything of consequence toward the development of the property. This enforced idleness eventually became intolerable and early in 1906, the company in the meantime having sent one of its officers to Caracas to protect its interests, I returned to New York, after having held the fort for ten years. I came back much poorer in pocket, but with a fund of information regarding Venezuela and its people.

I have been in every country in South America and have studied all of them and there is no possibility of doubt that Venezuela is beyond comparison the richest in its natural resources. With the setting up of a firm and civilized government, which must come in the end, under an American protectorate if by no other means, all of the fairy stories that were told of it centuries ago will come true, and its development will eclipse all of the dreams that have been realized in our own country. It is a strange fact that Cumana in Venezuela (their respective names then

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being New Toledo and New Grenada), which was the first European settlement in South America of which there is authentic record, was founded one hundred years, less one, before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. In each case there was a fervent prayer for divine aid in establishing a Christian colony and building up a great country. Why one prayer was answered and the other was not is a matter I will not attempt to explain.

Like her West Indian neighbors, of which beautiful isles Americans now know so little, but of which they will know much more when their flag flies over all of them, as it must within the life of the present generation, Venezuela has been treated most bountifully by nature and most brutally by man. Cursed they all may have been by the seas of innocent blood in which they were barbarously bathed during their extended infancy and their prolonged childhood, from which they have not yet emerged. It seems that all the powers of darkness have conspired to retard their growth and hold them slaves to savagery. Accustomed from the days of the Spanish *conquistadores*, and the pirates who followed them, to being plundered and persecuted in every way that the mercenary mind of man could devise, the Venezuelanos have grown so hardened to turmoil and torture that it

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has become second nature to them to live in an atmosphere which generates riot and robbery. Their blood is an unholy mixture of Indian, Carib, and Spanish, with other and more recent strains of all sorts. They are the most inconsequential, emotional, ungrateful, and treacherous people on the face of the earth—and yet I love them. The ambition of their leaders runs only to graft, while the underlings yearn for war as a child cries for a plaything. At the behest of some self-constituted chieftain, who has strutted in front of a mirror until he imagines himself a second Simon Bolivar, they rise in rebellion, because it gives them a chance to prey on the country, and, if their revolt is successful, to continue and extend their preying. But some day a real man will rise up among them and lead them out of their blackness and butchery into peace and prosperity, and Venezuela, with her wild wastes of wealth, will become great beyond the imaginings of her discoverers.

This is not the full story of my life but it tells of some of the incidents which I have enjoyed the most. My best fight was with old Moy Sen, the pirate king, in the China Sea, and my closest call was when I was sentenced to be shot at sunrise in Santo Domingo. These events supplied the most delightful feasts of the excitement which my nature has ever craved, yet

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I have lived well, in that respect, all along. I have no disappointments and no regrets, except that this existence is too short. If I had my life to live over again it would be lived in the same way, though, I would hope, with a still greater share of excitement, because it was for just such a life that I was created. What the purpose of it was I neither know nor care, nor am I in the least concerned as to what my destiny next holds in store for me. I hope, however, that in some land with opportunity for wide activity, I will be reincarnated as a filibuster and a buccaneer, and that I will so continue until my identity is merged into a composite mass of kindred souls.

THE END

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